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# **Pope Clement VIII and Confessional Conflict: International Papal Politics and Diplomacy (1598–1605)**

*Christian Schneider*

In the early modern period the Holy See refused to mediate between Catholic and Protestant sovereign powers by formal diplomatic peace missions. As a consequence, scholarly research on the early modern papacy as a peacemaking force tends to concentrate on peace negotiations between Catholic powers. This doctoral thesis, in contrast, analyses the attitude of the Holy See towards political reconciliation across confessional boundaries in a case study of Pope Clement VIII Aldobrandini (r. 1592–1605). It places papal politics and diplomacy at the centre of three conflicts which had a confessional dimension: the war of the Catholic Spanish Habsburgs with Protestant England, the Spanish attempts to suppress the rebellion of the predominantly Calvinist United Provinces in the Low Countries and the power struggle between the Catholic king of Sweden and his Lutheran uncle, Duke Charles of Södermanland.

This doctoral research analyses the role which Clement VIII's contemporaries expected the pontiff to fulfil in transconfessional peace processes and how far Clement VIII complied with such expectations. It sheds new light on the pope's interpretation of his traditional duties as the spiritual head of the *respublica christiana* to protect Christendom against those whom the papacy regarded as 'heretics', 'schismatics' and 'infidels'. This study will argue that Clement VIII followed a flexible religious policy and that, if necessary, the Aldobrandini pontiff was willing to promote the idea of a reconciliation between Catholic and Protestant powers. The transnational approach of this thesis will demonstrate that the response of the Holy See to regional and confessional conflicts needs to be understood as part of a wider strategy of the papacy which aimed at retaining the Catholic religion in the short-term and at restoring it throughout Christendom in the long-term.

***Pope Clement VIII and Confessional Conflict: International Papal  
Politics and Diplomacy  
(1598–1605)***

*Christian Schneider*

**Ph.D. Thesis  
Department of History  
University of Durham  
2016**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ADP	Archivio Doria Pamphilj
AGR	Archives Générales du Royaume
AGS	Archivo General de Simancas
AMAE	Archives du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères
<i>Arm.</i>	<i>Armadio</i>
ASV	Archivio Segreto Vaticano
BAV	Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
CSP	<i>Calendar of State Papers relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots, 1547–1603</i>
DBI	<i>Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani</i>
<i>Del Bufalo</i>	<i>Correspondance du nonce en France: Innocenzo del Bufalo évêque de Camerino (1601–1604)</i>
<i>FA</i>	<i>Fondo Aldobrandini</i>
<i>FB</i>	<i>Fondo Borghese</i>
<i>Frangipani</i>	<i>Correspondance d'Ottavio Mirto Frangipani: premier nonce de Flandre (1596–1606)</i>
JAITNER	<i>Die Hauptinstruktionen Clemens' VIII. für die Nuntien und Legaten an den europäischen Fürstenthöfen (1592–1605)</i>
NLS	National Library of Sweden
<i>P.R.O.</i>	<i>Public Record Office</i>
SNA	Swedish National Archives
TNA	The National Archives
<i>Urb. Lat.</i>	<i>Urbinati Latini</i>

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## **NOTES ON NAMES, TERMINOLOGY AND DATES**

This doctoral thesis uses the English form of names for princes unless they are commonly referred to in their original names in Anglophone scholarship. For example: 'Henry IV of France' rather than 'Henri IV' but 'Archduchess Isabella' instead of 'Archduchess Elizabeth'. The names of other individuals will be used as they spelt them. The terms 'Low Countries' and 'Flanders' refer to all provinces of the Netherlands which were once ruled by the Habsburgs. I use the terms 'United Provinces', 'States General' and the 'Dutch' for the seven northern provinces of the Netherlands which revolted against Habsburg rule. By 'the archdukes', I mean Archduke Albert and Archduchess Isabella, the rulers of the provinces in the Low Countries which had remained loyal to the Habsburgs. All translations are my own unless otherwise indicated. Dates are all in New Style except where I explicitly state that they are in Old Style.

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In autumn 1598, Pope Clement VIII Aldobrandini (r. 1592–1605) was filled with joy. Towards the end of his sojourn in Ferrara, the pontiff congratulated the imperial ambassador for Buda's capture from the Ottoman army and, talking at length, declared that 1598 had been 'the year of miracles': the Holy See had reintegrated the duchy of Ferrara into the Papal States, the papacy had established peace between Spain and France, Christian troops had freed 'Giavarino' (modern-day Győr in north-western Hungary) from the Ottomans and now Buda had fallen as well. Therefore, at present, the pope had only one more wish: that, with the help of God, he would be able to return safely from Ferrara to Rome.<sup>1</sup> This last wish was fulfilled in December 1598.<sup>2</sup> As much as the 'year of miracles' may have given cause for joy to the pope, Clement VIII did not live happily ever after.

Certainly, the recuperation of Ferrara was a triumph.<sup>3</sup> The pope's congratulations to the imperial ambassador for the capture of Buda, on the other hand, were premature. Although the imperial troops had besieged Buda in September and October 1598, they did not manage to conquer the fortress and had to lift the siege due to adverse weather conditions: clearly, the fall of Győr on 29 March and the subsequent conquest of numerous smaller strongholds had not initiated the hoped-for military breakthrough in the war against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>4</sup>

It is true that, on 2 May 1598, Cardinal Alessandro de' Medici, the later Pope Leo XI (r. April 1605), secured the most important success for Clement VIII as supreme peacemaker of Christendom: the conclusion of the Franco-Spanish peace of Vervins.<sup>5</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> BAV, *Urb. Lat.*, 1066, f. 21v: 'Avviso di Ferrara', 24 Oct 1598.

<sup>2</sup> JAITNER, vol. I (Tübingen, 1984), p. CXIII.

<sup>3</sup> On Ferrara, see: Birgit Emich, *Territoriale Integration in der Frühen Neuzeit: Ferrara und der Kirchenstaat* (Cologne, 2005), in particular pp. 85–102; Maria Teresa Fattori, *Clemente VIII e il sacro collegio (1592–1605): meccanismi istituzionali ed accentrimento di governo* (Stuttgart, 2004), pp. 95–153; Bernard Barbiche, *Bulla, Legatus, Nuntius: études de diplomatique et de diplomatie pontificales (XIII<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle)* (Paris, 2007), pp. 367–406.

<sup>4</sup> Jan Paul Niederkorn, *Die europäischen Mächte und der 'Lange Türkenkrieg' Kaiser Rudolfs II. (1593–1606)* (Vienna, 1993), p. 14.

<sup>5</sup> Agostino Borromeo, 'Clément VIII, la diplomatie pontificale et la paix de Vervins', in Jean-François Labourdette, Jean-Pierre Poussou and Marie-Catherine Vignal (eds.), *Le Traité de Vervins* (Paris, 2000), pp. 323–344; Barbiche, *Bulla*, pp. 439–446; Arthur Erwin Imhof, *Der Friede von Vervins, 1598* (Aarau, 1966). Still important is: Armand Louant, 'L'intervention de Clément VIII dans le traité de Vervins', *Bulletin de*

theory, the papacy thus restored peace to Catholic Christendom. Yet, the Peace of Vervins did not end Franco-Spanish antagonism and military conflicts between Catholic and Protestant powers continued to complicate the pope's efforts to unite the forces of Catholic Christendom against the Ottomans:<sup>6</sup> the Spanish Habsburgs remained at war with Protestant England and with the Calvinistic Dutch rebels. To make matters worse, the military victory of a Protestant duke over the Catholic king of Poland and Sweden in autumn 1598 had the potential to draw the commonwealth of Poland–Lithuania, the bulwark of Latin Christendom against 'schismatics' and 'infidels', into chaos.

This thesis places Clement VIII at the centre of the conflicts of the Spanish Habsburgs with England and the Dutch, as well as of the Polish-Swedish king with one of his Protestant relatives. It analyses Clement VIII's attitude towards peace between Protestants and Catholics and examines the degree to which the pope advocated cross-confessional political reconciliation. This study sheds new light on Clement VIII's interpretation of his role as the spiritual head of Christendom whose duty it was to make peace in order to protect Catholicism against its enemies. This study aims to overcome the traditional focus on political and religious issues which either concentrates on a national level or approaches international negotiations from a national perspective: the multinational approach of this thesis situates papal politics and diplomacy within the international scope in which the Holy See actually operated.

Thirty years ago, Johannes Burkhardt emphasised that the early modern papacy generally supported Catholic powers in conflicts against enemies of the Church, in extreme cases even in a religious war. Burkhardt highlighted that there were a few instances in which the Holy See did not insist that Catholic princes had to wage war against confessional enemies. Still, he underlined that popes regarded it as their duty to work only for peace among Catholic rulers in their role as supreme peacemakers of Christendom. Accordingly, throughout the early modern period, the Holy See never considered envisaging any diplomatic activity which would have aimed at settling conflicts between Catholic princes and enemies of the Catholic Church. According to Burkhardt, it was probably as late as 1806 that the Holy See offered to make peace between Catholic and Protestant states for the

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*l'Institut historique belge de Rome*, 12 (1932), pp. 127–186. For the peace treaty, see: Bertrand Haan, 'La dernière paix catholique européenne: édition et présentation du traité de Vervins (2 mai 1598)', in Claudine Vidal and Frédérique Pilleboue (eds.), *La Paix de Vervins, 1598* ([Laon], 1998), pp. 9–63.

<sup>6</sup> JAITNER, vol. I, pp. XIII–XXII. See also: Géraud Poumarède, *Pour en finir avec la Croisade: mythes et réalités de la lutte contre les Turcs aux XVI<sup>e</sup> et XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Paris, 2004), pp. 246–253, 280–287.

first time.<sup>7</sup> The best-known example which underlines Burkhardt's observation certainly is the papacy's refusal to mediate between Catholics and Protestants during the negotiations which led to the Peace of Westphalia (1648).<sup>8</sup>

The evidence for Johannes Burkhardt's assertion seems compelling: after all, as Burkhardt highlighted, none of the countless formal papal peace missions and attempts at reconciliation from the outbreak of the Reformation to the Seven Years' War (1754–1763) aimed at making or advancing peace between Catholic and Protestant sovereign powers.<sup>9</sup> Studies of papal peacemaking normally concentrate on the direct involvement of papal actors in peace talks and therefore on peace between Catholic rulers only.<sup>10</sup> Consequently, Burkhardt's assertion has never been adequately contested. Burkhardt, however, based his assertion on an overview of Ludwig von Pastor's *History of the Popes*.<sup>11</sup> As extensive as Pastor's work may be, it is obviously not exhaustive and, as this study will show, misses important aspects of papal politics and diplomacy.

This doctoral thesis engages with Burkhardt's assertion in a case study of Clement VIII Aldobrandini and analyses the challenges faced by papal peacemaking following the appearance of Protestants within the international power system. This study will confirm Burkhardt's observation in as much as the Holy See did not envisage making peace between Catholic and Protestant sovereign powers in formal diplomatic peace talks. It will, however, argue that historians should also analyse the papacy's opinion about peace negotiations between Catholic and Protestant sovereign powers in which the papacy did not become directly involved. Moreover, it argues that scholars should study papal attempts at reconciliation between Catholic rulers and Protestants whom the Catholic princes regarded as their subjects. Such an approach to papal diplomacy and politics enhances our

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<sup>7</sup> Johannes Burkhardt, *Abschied vom Religionskrieg: Der Siebenjährige Krieg und die päpstliche Diplomatie* (Tübingen, 1985), pp. 5–6, 373–374.

<sup>8</sup> Alexander Koller, *Imperator und Pontifex: Forschungen zum Verhältnis von Kaiserhof und römischer Kurie im Zeitalter der Konfessionalisierung (1555–1648)* (Münster, 2012), pp. 197, 202; Lucien Bély, 'La médiation diplomatique au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle et au début du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle', *Armées et diplomatie dans l'Europe du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle: Actes du Colloque de 1991. Bulletin de l'Association des Historiens modernistes des Universités*, 16 (1992), p. 132.

<sup>9</sup> Burkhardt, *Abschied*, p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> E.g.: Alain Tallon, 'Conflits et médiations dans la politique internationale de la papauté', in Maria Antonietta Visceglia (ed.), *Papato e politica internazionale nella prima età moderna* (Rome, 2013), pp. 117–129; Alain Tallon, 'Les missions de paix de la papauté au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle', in Daniel Tollet (ed.), *Guerres et paix en Europe centrale aux époques moderne et contemporaine: mélanges d'histoire des relations internationales offerts à Jean Béranger* (Paris, 2003), pp. 165–180; Guido Braun, 'Innozenz X.: Der Papst als *padre comune*', in Michael Matheus and Lutz Klinkhammer (eds.), *Eigenbild im Konflikt: Krisensituationen des Papsttums zwischen Gregor VII. und Benedikt XV.* (Darmstadt, 2009), pp. 119–156; Guido Braun, 'Päpstliche Friedensvermittlung am Beispiel von Piombino und Porto Longone', *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 83 (2003), pp. 141–206; Konrad Repgen, *Dreissigjähriger Krieg und Westfälischer Friede: Studien und Quellen*, eds. Franz Bosbach and Christoph Kampmann (Paderborn, 1998), pp. 799–816; Barbiche, *Bulla*, pp. 161–179; Poumarède, *Croisade*, pp. 199–305.

<sup>11</sup> Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes from the Close of the Middle Ages: Drawn from the Secret Archives of the Vatican and Other Original Sources*, 40 vols. (London, 1891–1953 ed.).

understanding of a pope's interpretation of his role as an international figurehead. This study focuses on an aspect of Clement VIII's diplomatic activities which has not yet been recognised in historical scholarship: Clement VIII actively advised Catholic rulers to come to terms with 'heretics' and was even willing to promote transconfessional agreements by diplomatic means behind the scenes.

This thesis analyses Clement VIII's diplomatic involvement in projects that aimed at settling three major political and religious conflicts in northern Europe in 1600 and is divided into three parts. The first part examines the wider theoretical, historical and 'institutional' context within which the Holy See conducted international politics and diplomacy. Chapter 1 explains how early modern thinkers discussed cross-confessional contacts and whether Catholic sovereigns had to wage religious wars against 'heretics' or whether they could even tolerate 'heretical' worship within their dominions. Chapter 2 shows how the papal diplomatic network expanded over the course of the sixteenth century and that the influence of the Roman inquisition on international papal policies and diplomacy increased over the second half of the sixteenth century. It will also situate the pontificate of Clement VIII within this process and explain who had an influence on him as well as how he handled opposition to his religio-political policies.

The core of this thesis is presented in Parts II and III. Part II concentrates on two linked conflicts in north-western Europe: the Spanish Habsburgs' conflicts with the English Protestants and with their Calvinistic 'rebels' in the Low Countries. Part III focuses on a strife between the Catholic King Sigismund III of Poland and Sweden (r. 1587–1632 and 1592–1599/1632 respectively) and his Protestant uncle, Charles Vasa, who subsequently ruled Sweden as Charles IX (r. 1604–1611).

In part II, Chapter 3 analyses Clement VIII's attempts to influence the Spanish Habsburgs during the preliminary peace talks with Queen Elizabeth I of England (r. 1558–1603) in 1599 and 1600. Chapter 4 discusses the pontiff's attitude towards King James VI of Scotland (r. 1567–1625) before and after his accession in England in 1603. Chapter 5 highlights the degree to which Clement VIII's policies towards England coincided with those of the Spanish court and how Spain responded to the pope's recommendation in favour of peace with James VI/I. Together, chapters 3, 4 and 5 underline that, despite purportedly similar goals for the Catholic religion in England, English affairs at times strained the relations between the Holy See and the Habsburg courts in Spain and Brussels. Chapter 6 concentrates on Clement VIII's attitude towards the pacification of the Low Countries and on expectations of Catholic princes that the pope would promote a settlement between the Catholic Habsburgs and the predominantly Calvinistic United Dutch

Provinces.

Part III shifts the focus to the plight of the Catholic Sigismund Vasa, king of Poland and Sweden. This part consists of two closely linked chapters which analyse an exchange of letters between Charles Vasa, that is, King Sigismund's Protestant uncle, and the pope. Chapter 7 analyses the first two letters and Chapter 8 the last epistle of this correspondence. This has been presented as two chapters to facilitate the close examination of a correspondence whose significance has hitherto not been recognised in historical scholarship and to present it in a reader-friendly format. Together, chapters 7 and 8 shed an entirely new light on Clement VIII's interpretation of his role as the spiritual head of Christendom. They demonstrate that the pope's traditional duty to care for peace in Christendom and for the war against the Ottomans could serve as a diplomatic device for a Protestant prince and a supreme pontiff to discuss ideas of reconciliation across confessional boundaries. Chapter 8 will also consider Clement VIII's decision to envisage promoting such a reconciliation within his broader Poland, Sweden and anti-Ottoman policies.

Parts II and III in this thesis are thematically linked by the problems which the 'real presence' of Protestant powers in the Latin West posed for papal politics and diplomacy, particularly in light of the perceived external threat to Christendom which arose from the advancing Ottomans. These two parts show that the traditional duties of the spiritual head of Christendom, and Clement VIII's particular dedication to them, provided other princes with a means to incite the pope to care for peace across confessional boundaries. Thus the thesis enhances our understanding of the role which other princes expected the pope to fulfil in transconfessional peace processes as well as of the political role which Clement VIII was disposed to play as the supreme pacifier of the religiously fragmented *respublica christiana*.

The analysis of Clement VIII's attitude towards transconfessional peace agreements in this thesis is based on diplomatic correspondence. It therefore concentrates on the pope's relations with other princes rather than on institutional mechanisms at the papal court.<sup>12</sup> This study partially relies on Klaus Jaitner's edition of Clement VIII's general instructions for his nuncios and legates.<sup>13</sup> These sources provide important information on the pope's religio-political goals and on his stance towards specific problems at the time when he tasked a representative with a diplomatic mission. The pontiff's general instructions, however, do not shed light on the pope's response to events as they unfolded and how his

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<sup>12</sup> For a detailed study of the institutional consolidation of papal power during the pontificate of Clement VIII, see: Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, passim.

<sup>13</sup> JAITNER, 2 vols (Tübingen, 1984).

attitude changed or evolved over time. This research is therefore mainly based on three sets of primary sources: letter exchanges between princes, diplomatic correspondence and minutes of meetings of the Spanish Council of State.

This thesis analyses the correspondence between Clement VIII and princes such as Philip III of Spain (r. 1598–1621), Archduke Albert of Austria (1559–1621), the archbishop of Cologne (r. 1583–1612), King James VI/I of Scotland and England, Queen Anne of Denmark (1574–1619) and Charles Vasa. Close attention to the language and epistolary ceremonial used in these letters will allow me to establish how princes presented their requests or justified their actions to the pope as well as how Clement VIII responded to them. The diplomatic correspondence between Rome and the nuncios in Flanders and Poland will highlight how political and military events affected papal policies, what course of action Clement VIII intended to take and how rulers reacted to papal diplomacy. The letters of the Spanish ambassador in Rome for Philip III and their discussion at the Council of State in Spain will show how the Spanish interpreted the pope's policies, what they expected him to do and how they wished to present the actions of the Spanish king to Clement VIII. These sources will reveal the degree to which the pope was willing to become involved in transconfessional peace talks and what action other princes expected him to take. Thus, these primary sources will allow me to place the papacy's daily responses to religio-political challenges and expectations within Clement VIII's wider efforts to restore the Catholic religion across Christendom and to defend it against the Ottomans.

The 'confessionalisation' paradigm, developed by Heinz Schilling<sup>14</sup> and Wolfgang Reinhard<sup>15</sup> for the Protestant and Catholic camps, has significantly influenced historical research in the early modern period.<sup>16</sup> Heinz Schilling brought new impulses to the study of the effects of confessional considerations on international politics and diplomacy, particularly in his principal field of expertise, that is, in the Lutheran and Calvinist

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<sup>14</sup> E.g.: Heinz Schilling, 'Die Konfessionalisierung von Kirche, Staat und Gesellschaft: Profil, Leistung, Defizite und Perspektiven eines geschichtswissenschaftlichen Paradigmas', in Wolfgang Reinhard and Heinz Schilling (eds.), *Die katholische Konfessionalisierung: Wissenschaftliches Symposium der Gesellschaft zur Herausgabe des Corpus Catholicorum und des Vereins für Reformationsgeschichte, 1993* (Gütersloh, 1995), pp. 1–49; Heinz Schilling, 'Confessionalization: historical and scholarly perspectives of a comparative and interdisciplinary paradigm', in John M. Headley and Hans J. Hillerbrand (eds.), *Confessionalization in Europe (1555–1700): Essays in Honor and Memory of Bodo Nischan* (Ashgate, 2004), pp. 21–30.

<sup>15</sup> E.g.: Wolfgang Reinhard, 'Reformation, Counter-Reformation, and the early modern state: a reassessment', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 75 (1989), pp. 383–404; Wolfgang Reinhard, 'Was ist katholische Konfessionalisierung?', in Reinhard and Schilling (eds.), *Konfessionalisierung*, pp. 419–452.

<sup>16</sup> For a critical view, see: Heinrich Richard Schmidt, 'Sozialdisziplinierung? Ein Plädoyer für das Ende des Etatismus in der Konfessionalisierungsforschung', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 265 (1997), pp. 639–682. See also: Thomas A. Brady, 'Confessionalization: the career of a concept', in Headley and Hillerbrand (eds.), *Confessionalization*, pp. 1–20.



confessional camp.<sup>17</sup> Historical research on Catholic diplomacy has been slower in adopting the methodologies and concepts of the confessional paradigm.<sup>18</sup> Birgit Emich explained that this might be because Wolfgang Reinhard, the principal promoter of the research on Catholic confessionalisation, seems to be less interested 'in the impact of confessionalisation on exterior relations', unless it also affected internal 'mechanisms' of state-building.<sup>19</sup> Still, Wolfgang Reinhard and his students have profoundly influenced historical research on the papal curia and on the pontificate of Paul V Borghese.<sup>20</sup> In an overview of the papacy's policy of Catholic restoration between 1550 and 1650, Alexander Koller refuted Heinz Schilling's assertion that, although religion was never the sole factor which determined politics, there was a spirit of confessional fundamentalism ('Konfessionsfundamentalismus') around 1600 which induced all confessional camps to further the interests of their church by all military and political means at their disposition.<sup>21</sup>

Koller's challenge to Schilling's general observation focused mainly on the pontificates of Clement VIII, Paul V (r. 1605–1621), Gregory XV (r. 1621–1623) and Urban VIII (r. 1623–1644). Between 1592 and 1644, Koller asserted, the actual policies of the Holy See sometimes deviated significantly from the confessional ideals and goals of the post-Tridentine Church, with the exception of Gregory XV's pontificate. Koller emphasised

<sup>17</sup> Birgit Emich, 'Confessions et relations internationales à l'époque moderne: l'historiographie de langue allemande', in Philippe Büttgen and Christophe Duhamelle (eds.), *Religion ou confession: un bilan franco-allemand sur l'époque moderne (XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Paris, 2010), p. 339. E.g.: Heinz Schilling, *Konfessionalisierung und Staatsinteressen: Internationale Beziehungen (1559–1660)* (Paderborn, 2007); Heinz Schilling, 'Gab es um 1600 einen Konfessionsfundamentalismus? Die Geburt des internationalen Systems in der Krise des konfessionellen Zeitalters', in *Jahrbuch des Historischen Kollegs 2005* (Munich, 2006), pp. 69–93. For Schilling's reflections on papal politics and diplomacy, see: Heinz Schilling, 'The two papal souls and the rise of an early modern state system', in Visceglia (ed.), *Papato*, pp. 103–116; Heinz Schilling, 'La politica del Papato e la formazione degli stati in Europa nell'età della confessionalizzazione', in Irene Fosi and Alexander Koller (eds.), *Papato e Impero nel pontificato di Urbano VIII* (Vatican City, 2013), pp. 1–16. See also the essays in: Heinz Schilling (ed.), *Konfessioneller Fundamentalismus: Religion als politischer Faktor im europäischen Mächtesystem um 1600* (Munich, 2007). For references to further studies, see: Emich, 'Confessions', pp. 339–353.

<sup>18</sup> Emich, 'Confessions', p. 344. For examples, see: Thomas Brockmann, 'Konfessioneller Fundamentalismus und Konfessionalisierung der Aussenpolitik? Überlegungen zur Politik Ferdinands II. (1618–1630)', in Thomas Brockmann and Dieter J. Weiss (eds.), *Das Konfessionalisierungsparadigma – Leistungen, Probleme, Grenzen* (Münster, 2013), pp. 235–264; Markus Reinbold, *Jenseits der Konfession: Die frühe Frankreichpolitik Philipps II. von Spanien (1559–1571)* (Stuttgart, 2005).

<sup>19</sup> Emich, 'Confessions', p. 345. See also: Maria Antonietta Visceglia, 'The international policy of the papacy: critical approaches to the concepts of Universalism and *Italianità*, Peace and War', in Visceglia (ed.), *Papato*, p. 51.

<sup>20</sup> E.g.: Wolfgang Reinhard, *Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621): mikropolitische Papstgeschichte* (Stuttgart, 2009); Christian Wieland, *Fürsten, Freunde, Diplomaten: Die römisch-florentinischen Beziehungen unter Paul V. (1605–1621)* (Cologne, 2004); Wolfgang Reinhard (ed.), *Römische Mikropolitik unter Papst Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621) zwischen Spanien, Neapel, Mailand und Genua* (Tübingen, 2004); Guido Metzler, *Französische Mikropolitik in Rom unter Papst Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621). Vorgelegt von Wolfgang Reinhard* (Heidelberg, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Koller, *Imperator*, pp. 139–156. For Schilling's assertion, see: Schilling, *Konfessionalisierung und Staatsinteressen*, p. 40; Schilling, 'Gab es um 1600 einen Konfessionsfundamentalismus?', pp. 78, 86, 89–92. For a similar view to Schilling, see: Konrad Repgen, 'What is a "Religious War"?', in Erkki I. Kouri and Tom Scott (eds.), *Politics and Society in Reformation Europe: Essays for Sir Geoffrey Elton on his Sixty-Fifth Birthday* (New York, 1987), p. 311.

that, instead of following a confrontational course against the Protestant 'heresies', Clement VIII, Paul V and Urban VIII tended to prioritise their interests as temporal rulers of the Papal States and as heads of their families over their duties as the spiritual leaders of Christendom.<sup>22</sup>

Koller's essay underlay an argument advanced by Paolo Prodi's influential work.<sup>23</sup> Prodi argued that the concern of early modern popes to assert and consolidate their position as temporal rulers of the Papal States often took priority over the implementation of the reforms that had been decided on by the Council of Trent (1545–1563). Since their position as popes was religiously legitimised, this frequent disregard for ecclesiastical concerns within their own territory undermined their authority as temporal rulers of the Papal States and as spiritual heads of (Catholic) Christendom in the long term.<sup>24</sup>

In the wake of the opening of the archives of the *Sant'Ufficio* in the late 1990s, Italian scholars in particular have shed new light on the lasting influence of the pontificate of the inquisitor pope Paul IV (r. 1555–1559) on the religio-political orientation of the Holy See throughout the second half of the sixteenth and even into the seventeenth century.<sup>25</sup> Paul IV increased the power and influence of the *Sant'Ufficio* within the Church considerably and his measures 'survived' the efforts of Pius IV (r. 1559–1565) 'to reaffirm the independence of the pontiff' from the Roman inquisition.<sup>26</sup> The inquisitor pope Pius V (r. 1566–1572) continued the legacy of religious and political intransigence of his promoter Paul IV. The inquisitor pope Sixtus V (r. 1585–1590), in turn, resumed the same legacy of his protector, Pius V. The scholarly interest in the Roman inquisition also led to new insights on the influence of the Holy Office on the nuncio network and on the religio-political policies of the post-Tridentine papacy more generally. Thus, research on the Roman inquisition also introduced a confessional perspective to the study of the papacy's diplomatic relations

<sup>22</sup> Koller, *Imperator*, pp. 139–140, 145–149, 153–154.

<sup>23</sup> Paolo Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice: un corpo e due anime. La monarchia papale nella prima età moderna* (Bologna, 1982). Prodi revised some of his arguments in: Paolo Prodi, 'Il "sovrano pontefice"', in Giorgio Chittolini and Giovanni Miccoli (eds.), *Storia d'Italia*, vol. IX (*La Chiesa e il potere politico dal Medioevo all'età contemporanea*) (Turin, 1986), pp. 198–216. For Koller's reference to Prodi, see: Koller, *Imperator*, p. 146.

<sup>24</sup> For this analysis of Prodi's work, see: Anthony D. Wright, *The Early Modern Papacy: From the Council of Trent to the French Revolution (1564–1789)* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 2–4. For the relevant pages in Prodi's monograph, see: Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice*, pp. 295–344. For an assessment of Prodi's work, see also: Visceglia, 'The international policy', pp. 23–24.

<sup>25</sup> E.g.: Elena Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi: la definizione dei poteri nella Chiesa posttridentina* (Rome, 2007), passim; Gigliola Fragnito, *Proibito capire: la Chiesa e il volgare nella prima età moderna* (Bologna, 2005), pp. 27–80; Miguel Gotor, *I beati del papa: santità, Inquisizione e obbedienza in età moderna* (Florence, 2002), pp. 151–155. See also: Elena Bonora, 'L'archivio dell'Inquisizione e gli studi storici: primi bilanci e prospettive a dieci anni dall'apertura', *Rivista Storica Italiana*, 120 (2008), pp. 968–1002.

<sup>26</sup> Paolo Broglio, *La teologia e la politica: controversie dottrinali, Curia romana e Monarchia spagnola tra Cinque e Seicento* (Florence, 2009), p. XVIII.

which had been neglected in historical scholarship.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, this research underlined that, in addition to the preoccupation of post-Tridentine popes with the consolidation of their rule as temporal princes, the political authority of the pontiff as the spiritual head of Christendom was further undermined by their insistence that Catholic rulers had to prioritise religious over political concerns.<sup>28</sup>

Based on the papacy's claim to its divine right to intervene directly in the temporal sphere, Pius V and Sixtus V excommunicated and formally deposed Elizabeth I of England (r. 1558–1603) and Henry of Navarre (r. 1572–1610) – the later King Henry IV of France (r. 1589–1610) – respectively.<sup>29</sup> As Alain Tallon observed, this 'Roman offensive' was more than 'simple confessional intransigence'; it was 'a means' which allowed the papacy to reaffirm its right to intervene in temporal and spiritual matters.<sup>30</sup> The theocratic attempts of the post-Tridentine papacy to impose the supremacy of the Roman pontiff in the temporal and spiritual spheres and to re-establish the pope as the head of Christendom by fighting the Reformation, however, also led to its 'political disqualification'.<sup>31</sup> The 'rigorous separation between religion and politics, confessional norms and diplomatic negotiations' and the allocation of strict priority to religious over political concerns by the 'intransigent papacy of the second half of the sixteenth century' had counter-productive effects on the Holy See's political and diplomatic influence.<sup>32</sup> From the pontificate of Paul IV onwards, the other Catholic princes deemed that the papacy had increasingly lost the ability of the Renaissance popes 'to understand the political domain and its exigencies'. As a consequence, Catholic princes started 'to ignore' the attempts of the Holy See 'to dictate' which policy they had to follow.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> E.g.: Elena Bonora, "Ubique in omnibus circumspecti": diplomazia pontificia e intransigenza religiosa, in Renzo Sabbatini and Paola Volpini (eds.), *Sulla diplomazia in età moderna: politica, economia, religione* (Milan, 2011), pp. 61–76; Elena Bonora, 'Il sospetto d'eresia e i "frati diplomatici" tra Cinque e Seicento', in Gigliola Fragnito and Alain Tallon (eds.), *Hétérodoxies croisées: catholicismes pluriels entre France et Italie (XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVII<sup>e</sup> siècles)* (Rome, 2015), pp. 42–63; Alain Tallon, 'Entre intransigeance confessionnelle et casuistique diplomatique: pratiques de la diplomatie pontificale à la cour de France du XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle', in Massimo Donattini, Giuseppe Marocci and Stefania Pastore (eds.), *Per Adriano Prosperi*, vol. II (*L'Europa divisa e i nuovi mondi*) (Pisa, 2001), pp. 333–341; Alain Tallon, "'J'é grent peur que cet bonhomme de pape à la fin par ses fais trouble toute la crétièté": papauté, Inquisition romaine et incidents diplomatiques au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle', in Lucien Bély and Géraud Poumarède (eds.), *L'incident diplomatique (XVI<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle)* (Paris, 2010), pp. 115–138; Alain Tallon, "'C'est le pape et non un prince" (Catherine de Médicis): la disqualification politique de la papauté au temps de la Réforme catholique', in Philippe Levillain (ed.), *Rome, l'unique objet de mon ressentiment: regards critiques sur la papauté* (Rome, 2011), pp. 63–77. See also: Visceglia, 'The international policy', pp. 36–37.

<sup>28</sup> Tallon, "'C'est le pape'", p. 69.

<sup>29</sup> Thomas Dietrich, 'Robert Bellarmine: "De laicis". Randbemerkungen eines Kontroverstheologen zu Staatstheorie und Friedensethik', in Norbert Brieskorn and Markus Riedener (eds.), *Suche nach Frieden: Politische Ethik in der Frühen Neuzeit*, vol. II (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 259–260.

<sup>30</sup> Tallon, "'C'est le pape'", p. 69.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>32</sup> Tallon, 'Entre intransigeance', p. 339.

<sup>33</sup> Tallon, "'C'est le pape'", p. 65.

This doctoral thesis explores the degree to which the considerations of the Aldobrandini pontiff for his temporal interests as well as for the political and military exigencies of Catholic princes influenced his attitude towards transconfessional peace. It also analyses whether Catholic rulers listened to the pope's opinion and what policy other princes expected him to adopt in his role as the *padre comune* and supreme peacemaker of Christendom. It shows that, in his international religio-political policies, Clement VIII did take the interests of his family and of the Papal States into consideration indeed. Yet, this study argues that Clement VIII mainly departed from the intransigent course of his predecessors in order to fulfil a duty of the spiritual head of Christendom which had become inherently linked to the office of making peace among Christian princes prior to the Reformation: to unite the Christian armies against the Ottomans.

Although Christian doctrine exhorts all individuals to dedicate themselves to peace, the papacy regarded it as its particular duty to make peace in Christendom. This was a consequence of the pontificate of Gregory VII (r. 1073–1085) which 'represents the highest point of papal aspiration to dominion over the secular world'.<sup>34</sup> Gregory VII fundamentally shaped the self-conception of the papacy and the pope's position as the head of Christendom with a claim to act as the pacifier of the Christian world by virtue of the pontiff's universal power.<sup>35</sup> Peacemaking thus provided the papacy with a possibility to assert its claim to have the right to intervene in the temporal sphere and to underline its position as the spiritual head of Christendom in political practice.

Popes often tried to make peace by exhorting the princes of Christendom to embark on a crusade against a common enemy: as the religious leaders of the *respublica christiana*, the supreme pontiffs traditionally regarded it as their special duty to care for peace in Latin Christendom and to protect the Church against those whom they viewed as 'heretics', 'schismatics' and 'infidels'.<sup>36</sup> In particular after the fall of Constantinople in 1453, papal exhortations to Christian rulers to settle their differences and attempts of popes to unite them against the Ottoman empire re-enforced the pope's position as pacifier of Christendom.<sup>37</sup> In papal rhetoric, the pope's call for the war against the Ottomans therefore became closely associated with the pontiff's duty to care for peace among the Christian

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<sup>34</sup> Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes* (New Haven, 1997), p. 98.

<sup>35</sup> Christoph Kampmann, *Arbiter und Friedensstiftung: Die Auseinandersetzung um den politischen Schiedsrichter im Europa der Frühen Neuzeit* (Paderborn, 2001), pp. 31–33.

<sup>36</sup> Burkhardt, *Abschied*, pp. 5–6; Tallon, 'Les missions', p. 179.

<sup>37</sup> Dieter Mertens, 'Europäischer Friede und Türkenkrieg im Spätmittelalter', in Heinz Duchhardt (ed.), *Zwischenstaatliche Friedenswahrung in Mittelalter und Früher Neuzeit* (Cologne, 1991), pp. 45–90. See also: Kenneth M. Setton, *The Papacy and the Levant (1204–1571)*, vols. II–IV (Philadelphia, 1978–1984).

princes as the *padre comune* (also *padre universale* or *padre di tutti*), the 'common father' of all Christian princes.<sup>38</sup> These duties provided the Holy See with a means to reassert the papacy's supranational position and the authority of the pope as a universal prince in the decaying *respublica christiana*.

It is an established historical paradigm that the mediaeval, supranational *respublica christiana* disintegrated into a confessionally and politically fragmented international system of sovereign states in the early modern period. By around the mid-sixteenth century, the old order of the Latin West had collapsed, in short, due to the gradual emergence of the sovereign state; the challenges to the universal validity of canon law by the second scholastics in the wake of the discovery of the Americas; the Reformation and the Habsburg–Valois antagonism. A new system of international order, however, materialised slowly and was only fully established a century and a half after the conclusion of the Peace of Westphalia (1648).<sup>39</sup> The papacy itself, as Paolo Prodi argued, contributed to the establishment of the new sovereign state system by transforming the patrimony of Saint Peter into a sovereign Italian principality in the early modern period.<sup>40</sup> The overall collapse of Latin Christendom disestablished the papacy from the spiritual and political position which it claimed to occupy above all other Christian powers.<sup>41</sup> In their role as *padri comuni*, early modern popes continued to try and make peace as well as to form a league of (Catholic) princes against the enemies of the Church and thus also attempted to reassert the papacy's supranational position during this process of decay.<sup>42</sup>

Scholars who study the papacy as a peacemaking force tend to concentrate on the evolution of the pope's role from a mediaeval peacemaker who imposed arbitral awards to the early modern pacifier who tried to make parties agree on a compromise.<sup>43</sup> Similarly, the evolution from the Renaissance popes who were deeply embroiled in the Italian Wars (1494–1559) to seemingly(!) neutral princes who loved all Catholic rulers equally by the mid-seventeenth century has also attracted the attention of researchers.<sup>44</sup> The crisis of the

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<sup>38</sup> Repgen, *Dreissigjähriger Krieg*, p. 815; Burkhardt, *Abschied*, p. 370.

<sup>39</sup> Randall Lesaffer, 'Peace Treaties from Lodi to Westphalia', in Randall Lesaffer (ed.), *Peace Treaties and International Law in European History: From the Late Middle Ages to World War One* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 10–15, 42–44. For a classical account of the decay of the *respublica christiana*, see: Wilhelm G. Grewe, *The Epochs of International Law*, transl. Michael Byers (Berlin, 2000). See also: Heinrich Lutz, *Christianitas Afflicta: Europa, das Reich und die päpstliche Politik im Niedergang der Hegemonie Kaiser Karls V. (1552–1556)* (Göttingen, 1964).

<sup>40</sup> Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice*, p. 300.

<sup>41</sup> Lesaffer, 'Peace', pp. 12, 23–24, 42.

<sup>42</sup> Niederkorn, *Mächte*, pp. 101–102, 502; Tallon, 'Les missions', p. 180.

<sup>43</sup> Repgen, *Dreissigjähriger Krieg*, pp. 799–816; Kampmann, *Arbiter*, pp. 26–65.

<sup>44</sup> Tallon, 'Conflits', pp. 117–129; Tallon, 'Les missions', pp. 165–180; Braun, 'Innozenz X.', pp. 119–156; Braun, 'Päpstliche Friedensvermittlung', pp. 141–206. See also: Christian Schneider, '"Types" of peacemakers: exploring the authority and self-perception of the early modern papacy', in Stephen Cummins

*respublica christiana*, however, also confounded 'the normal dialogue of diplomacy and international law between the states':<sup>45</sup> for the papacy in particular, the presence of Protestant powers in Latin Christendom posed a serious challenge to the Holy See as a diplomatic actor and its policies on the international stage.<sup>46</sup> This thesis analyses how the presence of Protestants influenced the papacy's ability to make peace in Christendom and how it changed the image of the pope as a peacemaker.

It is well known that Clement VIII enhanced the papacy's political authority in Christendom by making peace between Catholic powers in the role of the supreme pontiff as the *padre comune*:<sup>47</sup> in 1598 the papacy made peace between Spain and France (Peace of Vervins) and in 1601 between France and Savoy (Peace of Lyons).<sup>48</sup> Clement VIII forbade his legate, Cardinal de' Medici, to admit the envoys of Henry IV's Protestant allies – England and the Dutch States General – to the papal peace negotiations in Vervins. The Holy See thus ensured that peace was concluded between Catholic powers only.<sup>49</sup>

As mentioned, scholars interested in popes as peacemakers tend to focus on the direct involvement of papal actors in peace talks and, as a consequence, on negotiations which aimed at restoring peace between Catholic rulers only. This thesis does not concentrate on formal peace negotiations between representatives of princes. Instead, it analyses discussions of the opening of potential cross-confessional peace talks. This move away from studying actual peace negotiations opens up new perspectives on papal diplomatic initiatives which did not necessarily succeed in the end. In the case of Clement VIII, this approach sheds new light on the pope's stance towards peace across confessional boundaries, on the expectations which other princes had of the pontiff as a peacemaker and whether Clement VIII fulfilled their hopes. The goal is to demonstrate that the appearance of Protestant princes within Europe also changed the face of the pope as a peacemaker. I will argue that the pontiff's refusal to make peace openly between Catholic and Protestant rulers did not signify that he did not consider promoting the initiation of transconfessional peace negotiations behind the scenes.

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and Laura Kounine (eds.), *Cultures of Conflict Resolution in Early Modern Europe* (Farnham, 2015), pp. 77–103.

<sup>45</sup> Lesaffer, 'Peace', p. 13.

<sup>46</sup> Schilling, 'The two papal souls', p. 116; Poumarède, *Croisade*, p. 281.

<sup>47</sup> Poumarède, *Croisade*, p. 248. For the emphasis on the themes of spiritual reconciliation in art throughout the pontificate of Clement VIII, see: Jack Freiberg, *The Lateran in 1600: Christian Concord in Counter-Reformation Rome* (Cambridge, 1995).

<sup>48</sup> Jean-François Chauvard, '"Come se fosse stato il Papa medesimo": la legazione del cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini (1600–1601) e la sua rievocazione', in Jean-François Chauvard, Andrea Merlotti and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (eds.), *Casa Savoia e Curia romana dal Cinquecento al Risorgimento* (Rome, 2015), pp. 195–229; Bertrand Haan, 'Le traité de Paris (27 Février 1600): un traité pour rien?', *Cahiers René de Lucinge*, 33 (1999), pp. 41–52; Bertrand Haan, 'La médiation pontificale entre la France et la Savoie de la paix de Vervins à la paix de Lyon (1598–1601)', *Cahiers René de Lucinge*, 34 (2000), pp. 5–20.

<sup>49</sup> Haan, 'La dernière paix', pp. 51–52, 63.

Klaus Jaitner's edition of Clement VIII's general instructions for his nuncios and legates led to the publication of an important essay collection.<sup>50</sup> In *Das Papsttum, die Christenheit und die Staaten Europas*, three contributions covered Clement VIII's relations with Spain, France and the republic of Venice while the rest of the essays approached Clement VIII's pontificate more thematically.<sup>51</sup> The collection, however does not contain any study which concentrates on the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth or on Clement VIII's concern for the religious situation in England and in the war-ravaged Low Countries.

For this thesis, the most important contributions in the aforementioned collection are the essays of Eckehart Stöve and Peter Bartl on Clement VIII's general attitude towards Protestants and on the pope's anti-Ottoman policy. Stöve demonstrated in an essay on Protestant heresies and *ragione di stato* that, in principle, the Aldobrandini pontiff insisted that the interests of religion and the interests of the state were one and the same: a policy which followed temporal interests at the expense of the Catholic religion was doomed to fail.<sup>52</sup> Over the course of the sixteenth century, this had become a recurring counter-reformatory motif which Giovanni Botero eventually introduced to the area of theoretical political thought in *Della ragion di stato* (1589).<sup>53</sup>

In a 'reply' to Jean Bodin's (c. 1529–1596) *Les six livres de la République* (1576) and to the 'Politiques français', Botero differentiated between a 'good' and a 'bad' reason of state.<sup>54</sup> According to Botero, the 'bad' reason of state aimed at the preservation of a prince's rule and subordinated religious interests entirely to the prince's political interests. The 'good' reason of state, conversely, 'reconciled the demands of the Catholic Church with the political necessities of the time'.<sup>55</sup> Botero particularly stressed that 'religion is the fundament of all principalities' and because 'all power comes from God', a Catholic prince could only obtain 'the grace and favour of God' if he protected the (Catholic) religion; neglecting the interests of religion, in contrast, inevitably had to lead to the ruin of the prince.<sup>56</sup> Consequently, it was in a prince's own interest to follow the 'good' reason of state

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<sup>50</sup> JAITNER, 2 vols.

<sup>51</sup> Georg Lutz (ed.), *Das Papsttum, die Christenheit und die Staaten Europas (1592–1605): Forschungen zu den Hauptinstruktionen Clemens' VIII.* (Tübingen, 1994).

<sup>52</sup> Eckehart Stöve, 'Häresiebekämpfung und "ragione di stato": Die Protestanten und das protestantische Lager in den Hauptinstruktionen Clemens' VIII.', in Lutz (ed.), *Papsttum*, pp. 59, 64–65.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., pp. 57, 61. See also: Harro Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought: The Society of Jesus and the State (c. 1540–1630)* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 83. On Botero, see: Romain Descendre, 'Introduction', in Giovanni Botero, *De la raison d'État (1589–1598)*, edited and translated by Pierre Benedittini and Romain Descendre (Paris, 2014), pp. 7–57.

<sup>54</sup> Laurie Catteeuw, 'Le spectre de Machiavel au service de la curie romaine: le rôle de la censure ecclésiastique dans l'élaboration doctrinale de la raison d'État', in Brigitte Krulic (ed.), *Raison(s) d'État(s) en Europe: traditions, usages, recompositions* (Berne, 2010), p. 39.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.; Stéphane Bonnet, 'Botero machiavélien ou l'invention de la raison d'État', *Les Études philosophiques*, 66 (2003), p. 320.

<sup>56</sup> Giovanni Botero, *Della ragion di stato libri dieci* (Venice, 1589), p. 92.

and thus always to defend the Catholic religion.

As mentioned, in principle, Clement VIII too insisted that Catholic princes had to follow the 'good' reason of state. In his *Realpolitik*, however, the pope showed himself more pragmatic. According to Stöve, Clement grudgingly and tacitly agreed that rulers should prioritise political exigencies if religious and temporal interests conflicted and thus could not be reconciled in a policy which followed the 'good' reason of state. The pontiff justified this leniency with the hope that political stability and tranquillity in a commonwealth, the 'quiete publica', would allow the truth of the Catholic faith to triumph over the Protestant heresies in the long term.<sup>57</sup> Stöve mainly based his analysis on Clement VIII's general instructions which explained the pope's attitude towards 'heretics' in France and in the Holy Roman Empire. This thesis will use princely and diplomatic correspondence in order to show when and how the Holy See tried to implement this 'quiete publica'-policy in daily diplomacy and will situate it within the pope's interpretation of his role as the spiritual head of Christendom.

Also based on Clement VIII's general instructions, Peter Bartl analysed the pope's numerous diplomatic initiatives which aimed at inducing the Catholic princes of Europe to assist Emperor Rudolf II (r. 1576–1612) militarily and financially after Sultan Murad III (r. 1574–1595) had declared war on the emperor in August 1593.<sup>58</sup> Rudolf II's war against the Sublime Porte only ceased with the conclusion of the Peace of Zsitvatorok in 1606. The 'Long Turkish War' thus spanned the entire pontificate of Clement VIII and significantly shaped Rome's political and diplomatic activities.<sup>59</sup> the pontiff feared that the fall of Hungary to the Ottomans would expose the Habsburgs' hereditary lands, the empire and the Italian peninsula to the gravest risk.<sup>60</sup> According to Peter Bartl, Clement VIII therefore regarded the Ottoman Empire as 'the principal enemy and worse than the "heretics" – the Protestants – in France, Germany and elsewhere'.<sup>61</sup>

In an extensive study of Emperor Rudolf II's war against the Ottomans, Jan Paul Niederkorn documented Clement VIII's diplomatic activities in more detail and stressed the papacy's financial and military commitment to the anti-Ottoman war. In particular,

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<sup>57</sup> Stöve, 'Häresiebekämpfung', pp. 59, 64–65.

<sup>58</sup> Peter Bartl, 'Der Türkenkrieg: Ein zentrales Thema der Hauptinstruktionen und der Politik Klemens' VIII.', in Lutz (ed.), *Papsttum*, pp. 67–76. See also: Peter Bartl, "'Marciare verso Costantinopoli" – Zur Türkenpolitik Klemens' VIII.', *Saeculum*, 20 (1969), pp. 44–56. For Clement VIII's hopes on the participation of Henry IV in the war, see: Claude Michaud, 'Henri IV, le Pape Clément VIII et les turcs', in Tollet (ed.), *Guerres*, pp. 451–462.

<sup>59</sup> Bartl, 'Türkenkrieg', pp. 67–68; JAITNER, vol. I, pp. XIII, XVII–XXII.

<sup>60</sup> Bartl, 'Türkenkrieg', p. 67. See also: Burkhard Roberg, 'Türkenkrieg und Kirchenpolitik: Die Sendung Kardinal Madruzzos an den Kaiserhof 1593 und zum Reichstag von 1594. Teil I', *Quellen und Forschungen aus Italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 65 (1985), pp. 204–205.

<sup>61</sup> Bartl, 'Türkenkrieg', p. 67.



Niederkorn emphasised that Clement VIII often surpassed Emperor Rudolf II in his diplomatic initiatives and that even the pontiff's contemporaries expressed their astonishment at his diplomatic engagement for the war against the Ottomans.<sup>62</sup> In his analysis, Niederkorn concentrated on the pope's diplomatic efforts to gather support for the emperor's anti-Ottoman war at Catholic courts and emphasised that the pontiff's attempts to unite the kings of France and Spain in true friendship was motivated by his plans to form a league against the Sublime Porte.<sup>63</sup> Niederkorn, however, did not study whether and how Clement VIII's Ottoman policy also influenced his attitude towards the conflict of the Spanish Habsburgs with Protestant England and the Calvinist Dutch or towards the Polish-Swedish troubles. This doctoral thesis situates these conflicts within Clement VIII's wider policy of Catholic restoration and his anti-Ottoman policy.

This study approaches Clement VIII's religio-political goals from a transnational perspective, placing the pope's diplomatic activities at the centre of the conflicts of the Spanish Habsburgs in northern Europe and of the strife between the Vasa relatives. The ensuing chapters will explain that, after the Peace of Vervins, Clement VIII prioritised the defence of the Latin West against the Ottomans over the extirpation of heresy in his international policies. This thesis discusses how other rulers responded to the pope's policies, shows that there were princes who expected that the pope would promote agreements across confessional borders and explains under which circumstances Clement VIII complied with such expectations. Thus this study contrasts the pope's self-perception with the role which other rulers attributed to the supreme pontiff in his position as the spiritual head of the religiously divided *respublica christiana*.

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<sup>62</sup> Niederkorn, *Mächte*, p. 71.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., pp. 70–102, 161–175.

## ***PART I***

### ***Theoretical & 'institutional' context***

## Catholics and 'heretics': the theoretical context

The decay of the *respublica christiana* in the Late Middle Ages and the early modern period had a fundamental impact on the relations between canon law and the *ius gentium*. Canon law, 'which for centuries had offered the hard core of the body of rules governing the relations between the most important princes and republics of Christianity, was no longer accepted as universally applicable law' after the Reformation. Moreover, the discovery of the Americas, 'posed another challenge to the medieval international legal system'.<sup>64</sup> Francisco de Vitoria (c. 1483–1546) and other second scholastics rejected the papacy's claim to universal power and denied that the supreme pontiff had the authority to grant territories inhabited by 'pagans' to Christian rulers.<sup>65</sup> Most second scholastics emphasised that 'the European *ius gentium* or law of nations based on Roman and canon law was not applicable to the relations with the indigenous people of the newly discovered territories such as the Americas' since they 'had no relations whatsoever with either the Roman or the Christian past and traditions'.<sup>66</sup> The papal authority to intervene in the secular sphere, however, was also defended by Catholic theologians such as the Jesuit Robert Bellarmine (1542–1621).

In the late sixteenth century, Bellarmine discussed the theory of the papal *potestas indirecta* and defended it further in the early seventeenth century during the controversy between the papacy and James VI/I over the Oath of Allegiance.<sup>67</sup> In short, Bellarmine

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<sup>64</sup> Lesaffer, 'Peace', p. 12.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., pp. 12–13. See also: Anthony Pagden, 'Dispossessing the barbarian: the language of Spanish Thomism and the debate over the property rights of the American Indians', in Anthony Pagden (ed.), *The Languages of Political Theory in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 79–98; James Muldoon, *Popes, Lawyers, and Infidels: The Church and the Non-Christian World (1250–1550)* (Philadelphia, Pa., 1979), pp. 132–152. For the various bulls in which popes granted territories to Catholic princes, see: Visceglia, 'The international policy', pp. 24–25 (footnote 20). See also: Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace: Political Thought and the International Order from Grotius to Kant* (Oxford, 1999 ed.), pp. 61–63, 68–73.

<sup>66</sup> Lesaffer, 'Peace', p. 13. See also: Antony Anghie, 'Francisco de Vitoria and the colonial origins of International Law', *Social and Legal Studies*, 3 (1996), pp. 321–336.

<sup>67</sup> For Bellarmine and the *potestas indirecta* in the wider historical context, see: Franco Motta, *Roberto Bellarmino: teologia e potere nella Controriforma* (Milan, 2014), pp. 122–233; Franco Motta, *La fede e la spada: conflitti confessionali e pace civile nell'Europa del '600* (Bologna, 2013). See also: Klaus Schatz, 'Tyrannenmord, *potestas indirecta* und Staatssouveränität: Widerstandsrecht und Gallikanismus-Problematik

argued that the spiritual and the secular were two distinctly separate powers. The pontiff, as the Vicar of Christ, however, was the 'supreme judge of the faith' and therefore could, if necessary, interfere in temporal matters when the salvation of souls was at risk.<sup>68</sup> For example, if a sovereign issued laws which 'damaged the Catholic religion or conceded liberty of conscience to heretics', the pope had the authority to intervene in the temporal sphere and to correct the prince. As a means of last resort, the supreme pontiff could excommunicate sovereigns. According to canon law, this signified that the excommunicates were deprived of their political powers and that their subjects no longer owed them any obedience.<sup>69</sup>

The challenges to the universal validity of canon law and the presence of Protestants within Catholic commonwealths as well as in the international power system signified that early modern thinkers and rulers had to find answers to new, fundamental questions. Could Catholic sovereigns establish diplomatic contact with 'heretical' rulers? Did Catholic princes have the duty to fight 'heretical' sovereigns and to suppress heresy within their jurisdiction at all cost? Or could Catholic rulers also make peace with 'heretical' powers and tolerate heresy within their dominions? Did Catholic princes have to keep a *fides* (good faith) which they had given to 'heretics'?

These questions were not yet resolved when Clement VIII ascended the papal throne. This thesis explores Clement VIII's attitude towards diplomatic contact between the Holy See and Protestant powers, whether he considered that it was the duty of Catholic rulers to wage a religious war against 'heretics' and under which circumstances he deemed that Catholic-Protestant agreements were permissible. This chapter shows how Clement's Catholic contemporaries perceived contact with non-Catholics, the terms in which they debated whether Catholic rulers could tolerate 'heretical' subjects and how they discussed ideas of just and holy war. In this chapter I will discuss a sample of Catholic thinkers and their arguments in order to highlight that the opinion of Clement VIII's contemporaries on these issues diverged largely according to the school of thought to which they belonged.

In the centuries between early Christianity and the later Middle Ages, attitudes towards religious dissenters hardened increasingly. By the sixteenth century, there was an array of sources available in support of arguments for or against a moderate treatment of 'heretics': passages from the Old or the New Testament; Augustine's initial position against

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Anfang des 17. Jahrhunderts', in Brieskorn and Riedenauer (eds.), *Suche*, vol. I (Stuttgart, 2000), pp. 245–257; Visceglia, 'The international policy', pp. 53–54.

<sup>68</sup> Motta, *Roberto Bellarmino: teologia e potere*, pp. 33–34. See also: Franco Motta, *Bellarmino: una teologia politica della Controriforma* (Brescia, 2005), pp. 420–439.

<sup>69</sup> Motta, *Roberto Bellarmino: teologia e potere*, p. 34. See also: Mario Turchetti, *Tyrannie et tyrannicide de l'Antiquité à nos jours* (Paris, 2001), pp. 541–542.

any punishment or his later arguments in favour of the light disciplining of religious dissenters; and ultimately the more rigid positions in canon law, in the commentaries of mediaeval canonists and in the work of Aquinas.<sup>70</sup>

The Reformation, and the fact that a number of sovereign princes supported it, posed new problems for Catholic princes: could they establish diplomatic contact with 'heretical' powers, that is, with princes who ruled over territories situated within the *respublica christiana* and who had known the teachings of the 'true' Church and yet had forsaken it? In relation to the topic of this thesis, this addresses the question whether the Spanish Habsburgs and Rome, for example, could establish diplomatic relations with 'heretical' rulers such as the excommunicate Elizabeth I or the Protestant James VI/I.

Excommunication, the exclusion of an individual from the Christian community, was a punishment for religious dissenters as well as a means of protection against the spread of an 'erroneous' doctrine among the faithful.<sup>71</sup> In the Middle Ages, heresy became a crime which incurred the major excommunication *latae sententiae*. This signified that 'heretics' were deprived of all rights and contacts within Christian society as soon as they started to adhere to 'heretical' doctrines and thus even if they had not been formally condemned: 'heretics' had to be shunned by the faithful immediately after their heresy had become notoriously 'known' or announced to them by an ecclesiastical authority.<sup>72</sup> In the decretal *Ad abolendam* (1184), Pope Lucius III (r. 1181–1185) specified that a 'heretic' was unable to fulfil any public office and in 1199 Innocent III (r. 1198–1216), renewing the decretal of Lucius III, stipulated that heretics had to be excommunicated and their goods confiscated. Importantly, this meant that a prince who committed the crime of heresy could no longer legitimately fulfil his office as a ruler and that the Church could deprive him of his goods,

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<sup>70</sup> Joseph Lecler, *Histoire de la tolérance*, vol. I (Paris, 1955), p. 42–124; Robert A. Markus, 'The Latin Fathers', in James H. Burns (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought (c. 350–1450)* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 112–115; Othmar Hageneder, 'Der Häresiebegriff bei den Juristen des 12. und 13. Jahrhunderts', in Willem Lourdaux and Daniel Verhelst (eds.), *The Concept of Heresy in the Middle Ages (11th–13th c.): Proceedings of the International Conference, Louvain May 13–16, 1973* (Louvain, 1983 ed.), pp. 42–103; Helmut G. Walther, 'Häresie und päpstliche Politik: Ketzerbegriff und Ketzergesetzgebung in der Übergangsphase von der Dekretistik zur Dekretalistik', in Lourdaux and Verhelst (eds.), *Concept*, pp. 104–143; Sascha Ragg, *Ketzer und Recht: Die weltliche Ketzergesetzgebung des Hochmittelalters unter dem Einfluss des römischen und kanonischen Rechts* (Hannover, 2006), pp. 11–30, 59–66, 72–77. More generally see: Hans Maier, 'Compelle intrare: Rechtfertigungsgründe für die Anwendung von Gewalt zum Schutz und zur Ausbreitung des Glaubens in der Theologie des abendländischen Christentums', in Klaus Schreiner (ed.), *Heilige Kriege: Religiöse Begründungen militärischer Gewaltanwendung. Judentum, Christentum und Islam im Vergleich* (Munich, 2008), pp. 55–70.

<sup>71</sup> Brian A. Pavlac, 'Excommunication and Territorial Politics in High Medieval Trier', *Church History*, 60 (1991), pp. 22–23. See also: Toby Osborne, 'Friendship and trust in post-Reformation diplomacy: the Anglo-Spanish Peace of 1604–1605' (under revision).

<sup>72</sup> Véronique Beaulande-Barraud, 'Schisme, hérésie et excommunication chez les canonistes médiévaux', *Mélanges de l'École française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée modernes et contemporaines*, 126 (2014), paragraphs 18 and 36 [<http://mefrim.revues.org/1850>; accessed 2 Feb 2016]; Pavlac, 'Excommunication', p. 22.

his principality or kingdom included.<sup>73</sup>

In the thirteenth century, Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) emphasised that the Church did not have any authority to punish those who had never received the Christian faith, such as Jews and 'pagans', by excommunication. Consequently, the faithful were allowed to communicate with non-Christians. On the other hand, the faithful were not permitted to have contact with those who had forsaken the 'true' religion as 'heretics': the Church retained its spiritual authority over them and therefore had the right to punish them by excommunication. Yet Aquinas also specified that individuals who firmly adhered to the 'true' faith should be allowed to communicate with those who had forsaken it: hopefully this would lead to the conversion of the 'heretics' rather than to the corruption of the faith of the 'right' believer. In contrast, simple people and those of weak faith, he argued, should not be allowed to communicate with 'heretics' without necessity since there was too much of a risk that they would also fall into heresy.<sup>74</sup> Thus, Aquinas deemed that contact with 'heretics' should be permitted if it promised their salvation. This was an argument which early modern thinkers later also used in favour of legal, commercial or diplomatic contact with 'heretics'.

In the early fifteenth century, the Council of Constance (1414–1418) and the constitution *Ad evitanda scandala* (1418) of Pope Martin V (r. 1417–1431) eased the strict ban in canon law which forbade the faithful to have any contact with those who had incurred the major excommunication *latae sententiae*: only individuals whom the Church had explicitly named as excommunicates had to be shunned by the faithful.<sup>75</sup> Thus, the faithful now were allowed to maintain contact with individuals notoriously known to be 'heretics' but who had not been declared as excommunicated by any ecclesiastical authority. This alteration to mediaeval canon law arguably signified that Catholic sovereigns could maintain diplomatic contact with 'heretical' rulers for as long as they had not been excommunicated *nominatim* by the Church.

As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, the Reformation and the discovery of new territories overseas challenged the universal validity of canon law. This also had an effect on discussions about contacts of Catholics with 'heretics'. Hermas Laetmatius (also: Herman Lethmaet, 1492–1555), for example, was familiar with the argument of Francisco de Vitoria and other second scholastics who, based on Thomist thought, asserted that the

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<sup>73</sup> Lecler, *Histoire*, vol. I, p. 106, 110; Walther, 'Häresie', pp. 124–126, 134. For the decretals see: Aemilius Friedberg (ed.), *Corpus iuris canonici*, vol. II (Leipzig, 1879), pp. 780–783.

<sup>74</sup> Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Volume 32 (2a2ae. 8–16), Consequences of Faith*, transl. Thomas Gilby (Cambridge, 2006) (q. 10, a. 9); Lecler, *Histoire*, vol. I, p. 104.

<sup>75</sup> Beaulande–Barraud, 'Schisme', paragraph 39, footnote 82; Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought*, p. 158.

*dominium* over lands did not depend on adherence to the 'right' religion by its rulers.<sup>76</sup> Laetmatius, whom we will encounter again later in this chapter, adopted this argument in *De instauranda religione libri IX* (1544), arguing that the law of nature and the *ius gentium* not only allowed for relations of Catholics with 'pagans' and 'infidels' but also with 'heretics', for as long as they furthered rather than damaged Catholicism.<sup>77</sup> In the early seventeenth century, the established practice of Catholic powers to maintain diplomatic relations with 'heretics', at least with 'heretical' rulers who had not been excommunicated *expressis verbis* by the Church, was further defended by Gasparo Bragaccia (c. 1560/6–1629/32) and the Jesuit Martin Becanus (1563–1624). In *L'ambasciatore* (1626), Bragaccia, who had been a secretary on a Farnese embassy to Spain, put 'heretics' on a par with 'infidels' and emphasised that Catholic sovereigns should avoid establishing diplomatic contact with non-Christian rulers unless there was an 'urgent cause' to do so.<sup>78</sup> If, however, a Catholic power sent an ambassador to 'heretics' or 'infidels', the mission had to lead to a benefit not merely in temporal but also in spiritual matters. The ambassador and his household had to be a shining 'light' of piety and religiosity so that many 'heretics' or 'infidels' could be 'illuminated' by them and could 'receive some ray' of the Catholic faith.<sup>79</sup>

At the same time, the Jesuit Martin Becanus, an adviser and confessor of Emperor Ferdinand II (r. 1619–1637), stressed that Catholics should avoid all public or private contact with 'heretics' as much as possible. Yet, he also highlighted that, even if the current laws were stricter in Spain and Italy, the Council of Constance and Pope Martin V had 'greatly relaxed' canon law in as much as the strict ban for the faithful to have any 'dealings with heretics' had been concerned. The Church therefore did not necessarily prohibit Catholics to have contact or to engage in commercial as well as other negotiations with 'heretics' under all circumstances.<sup>80</sup> This thesis explores the degree to which Clement VIII regarded benefits for the Catholic religion as a legitimate reason for Catholic sovereigns to establish diplomatic contact or to negotiate peaceful relations with 'heretical' powers.

There was a further issue in the Reformation's wake: did Catholic princes always have the duty to punish heresy within their commonwealth or could they also tolerate

<sup>76</sup> Lesaffer, 'Peace', p. 12; Vincenzo Lavenia, 'La *fides* e l'eretico: una discussione cinquecentesca', in Paolo Prodi (ed.), *La fiducia secondo i linguaggi del potere* (Bologna, 2007), p. 208.

<sup>77</sup> Lavenia, 'La *fides*', p. 209.

<sup>78</sup> Gasparo Bragaccia, *L'ambasciatore del dottore Gasparo Bragaccia Piacentino: opera divisa in libri sei* (Padua, 1626), p. 86. For Bragaccia's work and other diplomatic treatises, see: Daniela Frigo, 'Prudenza politica e conoscenza del mondo: un secolo di riflessione sulla figura dell'ambasciatore (1541–1643)', in Stefano Andretta, Stéphane Péquignot and Jean-Claude Waquet (eds.), *De l'ambassadeur: les écrits relatifs à l'ambassadeur et à l'art de négocier du Moyen Âge au début du XIXe siècle* (Rome, 2015), pp. 261–263. See also: Osborne, 'Friendship' (under revision).

<sup>79</sup> Bragaccia, *L'ambasciatore*, p. 86. See also: Osborne, 'Friendship' (under revision).

<sup>80</sup> Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought*, pp. 157–158.

'heretics' within their territories? And did Catholic sovereigns have to keep a word (*fides*) given to 'heretics'? For example, if Catholic princes signed agreements with 'heretical' rulers or if they granted religious liberties to 'heretics', did they have to observe such pacts? It is out of the scope of this chapter to discuss the debates on religious toleration in detail and to situate them within the historical contexts in which they emerged in several areas of early modern Europe. Instead, it highlights some of the principal themes which many of these debates had in common by looking at the arguments of a few Catholic thinkers and advisers only.<sup>81</sup>

For example, in 1530, the confessor of Emperor Charles V Charles V (r. 1519–1556; crowned emperor 1530), the Dominican friar Juan García de Loaysa y Mendoza (1478–1546), cardinal of Osma, deemed that Charles V was unable to suppress the Lutheran 'heresy' in the empire by the means of force.<sup>82</sup> Therefore, at the end of July he advised the emperor that 'Your Majesty should make a compromise in Germany and excuse their heresies and let them live in the way that best suits them, while encouraging them to leave some of their past errors and come to an agreement on what least divides them'.<sup>83</sup> Thus Loaysa considered that a sovereign prince could desist from proceeding against 'heretics' and that he should attempt to convert them by peaceful means if he lacked the military force to suppress heresy.

Conversely, Hermas Laetmatius, whom we have already encountered, emphasised in 1544 that those who did not regard physical constraint as the right means for handling heresy 'committed a grave sin': their tolerant attitude inevitably led 'to dissent and internal war'.<sup>84</sup> He was convinced that religious toleration and theological debates with 'heretics' favoured the further spread of heresy rather than the desired restoration of religious unity in a commonwealth. Sovereigns therefore had to restore and preserve religious unity by force in order to avoid political instability.<sup>85</sup> Still, as we have seen, Laetmatius deemed that the law of nature and the *ius gentium* allowed Catholics to have contact with Protestants,

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<sup>81</sup> On religious concord and toleration, especially within the context of the French Wars of Religion, see, for example: Alain Tallon, 'Raison d'État, religion monarchique et religion du roi', in Büttgen and Duhamelle (eds.), *Religion ou confession*, pp. 355–371; Denis Crouzet, 'Un imaginaire au travail: le catholicisme militant pendant les guerres de Religion', in Büttgen and Duhamelle (eds.), *Religion ou confession*, pp. 541–557; Denis Crouzet, *Le haut coeur de Catherine de Médicis: une raison politique aux temps de la Saint-Barthélémy* (Paris, 2005); Guy Saupin, 'De la concorde religieuse à l'échec de la tolérance civile (1515–1589)', in Guy Saupin (ed.), *Tolérance et intolérance: de l'édit de Nantes à nos jours* (Rennes, 1998), pp. 9–22; Leclercq, *Histoire*, vol. II (Paris, 1955), pp. 6–279. For a comparative view, see: Oliver Christin, *La paix de religion: l'autonomisation de la raison politique au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1997). See also the essays in: Heinrich Lutz (ed.), *Zur Geschichte der Toleranz und Religionsfreiheit* (Darmstadt, 1977).

<sup>82</sup> Henry Kamen, 'Toleration and dissent in sixteenth-century Spain: the alternative tradition', *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19 (1988), p. 10.

<sup>83</sup> Quoted and translated in: *ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> Lavenia, 'La *fides*', pp. 207–208; Adriano Prosperi, *America e apocalisse, e altri saggi* (Pisa, 1999), p. 244.

<sup>85</sup> Lavenia, 'La *fides*', p. 208.



especially if it led to the conversion of 'heretics'. On the other hand, if such dealings with 'heretics' damaged the cause of the Catholic religion – Laetmatius also stressed – then Catholics did not need to keep a *fides* which they had given to Protestants.<sup>86</sup> In 1582, after the northern provinces of the Low Countries had formally deposed the Spanish king as their sovereign, the theologian Johannes Molanus (Jan van der Meulen, Jan Vermeulen, 1533–1585) defended a different position.

In *De fide haereticis servanda* (publ. 1584), Molanus argued that 'times of war required a certain elasticity' and that it was therefore 'licit for Catholics to sign a pact with heretics in order to avoid a greater evil':<sup>87</sup> it was better to 'tolerate an evil' by conceding some religious liberties to 'heretics' than to risk that they would rebel, usurp power and in the end forbid the Catholics to practise their religion.<sup>88</sup> Molanus also refuted Machiavelli's assertion in Chapter XVIII of *Il Principe* (composed c. 1513, published 1532) that a prince should keep his *fides* only if it served his own purposes; according to Molanus, 'all promises and oaths' were binding, including those given to 'heretics'.<sup>89</sup> In the early seventeenth century, the Jesuit Martin Becanus too discussed whether Catholic sovereigns could legitimately grant religious liberties to their 'heretical' subjects and whether Catholics had to observe a *fides* which they had given to Protestants.

As we have seen, Becanus deemed that Catholics should avoid contact with Protestants whenever possible. Yet he also underlined that such contacts had been rendered permissible when the Council of Constance restricted the ban on contact with 'heretics' in canon law to those 'heretics' only who had been explicitly declared as excommunicated by a Church authority.<sup>90</sup> Becanus, who had been influenced by the thought of Molanus, emphasised that if Catholics made a promise to 'heretics', they had to keep their word. He thought that the obligation of Catholics to keep a *fides* given to 'heretics' was even greater than to keep a promise given to 'pagans, Jews, or Turks' with whom pacts had to be observed: after all, Catholics and 'heretics' prayed to 'the same true God' and were 'more closely conjoined in virtue of their common baptism' than Catholics and non-Christians.<sup>91</sup>

With the Peace of Augsburg (1555), numerous pacifications in the Low Countries and the Edict of Nantes (1598) in mind, Becanus argued that Catholic princes could grant religious liberties to 'heretics' within their commonwealths under certain circumstances. A

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 209.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p. 216. For the work of Molanus, see also: Prosperi, *America*, pp. 243, 245–246; Lecler, *Histoire*, vol. II, pp. 201–203.

<sup>88</sup> Prosperi, *America*, p. 245. See also: Lecler, *Histoire*, vol. II, p. 201.

<sup>89</sup> Lavenia, 'La *fides*', pp. 213–214. See also: Prosperi, *America*, p. 245.

<sup>90</sup> Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought*, pp. 157–158.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p. 158.

sovereign could tolerate 'heretics' if they were stronger in number and force than the Catholics or if a greater good could be expected from clemency than from rigor. 'Heretics' could also be tolerated if the piety of the Catholics might inspire them to convert or if attempts to extirpate heresy entailed the risk that 'heretical' subjects would overthrow a prince and subsequently oppress the Catholics with the help of other powers.<sup>92</sup>

Any agreement or edict which granted religious liberties touched on matters of faith. Becanus, following the opinion of the fellow Jesuit Bellarmine, argued that the supreme pontiff had the power to intervene in the temporal sphere in spiritual matters and attributed to the pope the authority to decide over the validity of such agreements or edicts. At the same time, he refused to recognise 'the old canonist claims' that the pontiff was the '*dominus mundi*' who had 'all *potestas*'.<sup>93</sup> Becanus asserted that agreements between Catholic princes and 'heretics' became legally binding if the pope did not nullify them as soon as he learned of them.<sup>94</sup> The discussions how Catholic rulers should deal with 'heretics' did not stop at the gates of Rome.

In 1567, within the context of the religious and civil tumults in the Low Countries and France, Cardinal Marcantonio Da Mula (1506–1572) initiated a scholarly debate which led to a discussion among papal curialists how Catholics should handle the problem that heresy had spread widely in Christendom.<sup>95</sup> The participants in this debate were largely divided into two camps.<sup>96</sup> One side defended the position that, like in the times of early Christianity, the faithful should show mercy with 'heretics' and inspire them to convert by a pious, exemplary life.<sup>97</sup> The other side argued that Catholic princes and the Church had to punish, and if necessary execute, 'heretics' in order to prevent the 'illness' of heresy from 'infecting' the entire body of Christendom.<sup>98</sup>

The first group belonged to the remnants of the humanist circles at the papal curia and deemed that the exact definitions of dogmata and rituals in all religions, the Catholic religion included, were 'human constructs' which could be used for facilitating life within a commonwealth: they therefore conceded to 'the state' the authority to decide whether and how it should proceed against heterodoxy and thus to subordinate religious orthodoxy to its

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<sup>92</sup> Lecler, *Histoire*, vol. I, pp. 293–294; Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought*, p. 159.

<sup>93</sup> Höpfl, *Jesuit Political Thought*, p. 161.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>95</sup> Michela Catto, *Cristiani senza pace: la Chiesa, gli eretici e la guerra nella Roma del Cinquecento* (Rome, 2012), passim; Thomas Maissen, "'Per qual cagione per la Religione non si sia fatta guerra fra' Gentili, & perche si faccia tra Christiani': Eine Debatte an der Kurie im Jahre 1567", in Michael Erbe et al. (eds.), *Querdenken: Dissenz und Toleranz im Wandel der Geschichte* (Mannheim, 1996), pp. 135–151; Prosperi, *America*, pp. 257–262.

<sup>96</sup> Maissen, "'Per qual cagione'", p. 150.

<sup>97</sup> E.g.: Catto, *Cristiani*, pp. 51–61, 71–73.

<sup>98</sup> E.g.: *ibid.*, pp. 91–96.

needs in order to avoid the evil of war. The group of 'the dogmatists', in contrast, insisted on the 'absolute and universal validity' of the Catholic dogmata, as defined and interpreted by the Holy See, next to which no other confessional church could be tolerated. They condemned religious tolerance as a challenge to the truth of the 'divine mission' of the Roman Catholic Church and as an act of 'submission' of the one, true religion to the 'worldly needs' of the state.<sup>99</sup>

Ultimately, the question whether Catholic sovereigns could and should tolerate religious heterodoxy within their dominions revolved around the issue whether religious toleration helped to avoid a greater evil – such as war, civil unrest and political instability which had the potential to spread heresy further – or whether religious toleration itself (rather than war, civil unrest and political instability) was the greater evil. This doctoral thesis explores whether Clement VIII regarded cross-confessional agreements as legally binding and the degree to which he insisted that Catholic princes had to persist in persecuting 'heretics' whom he considered as their subjects, for example the (semi-sovereign) United Provinces or Duke Charles of Södermanland as the 'subjects' of the Habsburgs and of the Swedish king respectively.

Another important question which arose from the outbreak of the Reformation was whether it was legitimate or even an obligation for Catholic princes to fight 'heretics' in the name of religion: did religion constitute a just reason for waging war?<sup>100</sup> In the early modern period, advocates of holy war as a just war based their arguments on the 'themes of fault' and vindictive 'justice' which they found in the Old Testament, mediaeval canon law and in Aquinas's *Summa theologiae*: they argued that war could be justly waged against 'heretics' and 'infidels' in order to punish their 'offense against God' and to defend the 'true religion'.<sup>101</sup> Such a position was for example defended by a counsellor of Charles V, the canonist and Franciscan friar Alfonso de Castro (1495–1588). For Castro, 'heretics' were rebels who revolted against 'the political and religious authorities invested by a divine mandate'. Therefore, they had to be punished by death and fought in a 'religious war' which he regarded as an 'obligation' of all good Christians and as a 'just and holy war'.<sup>102</sup>

Subsequently, the defenders of a rigid attitude towards 'heretics', for example the Jesuit Antonio Possevino (c. 1533–1611) in *Il soldato christiano* (1569), introduced the

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<sup>99</sup> Maissen, "'Per qual cagione'", p. 150.

<sup>100</sup> Markus Kremer, *Den Frieden verantworten: politische Ethik bei Francisco Suárez (1548–1617)* (Stuttgart, 2008), pp. 14–22. For early modern debates on just war, see: Adriano Prosperi, 'Guerra "giusta" e cristianità divisa tra Cinquecento e Seicento', in Riccardo Bottoni and Mimmo Franzinelli (eds.), *Chiesa e guerra: dalla "benedizione delle armi" alla "Pacem in terris"* (Bologna, 2005), pp. 20–90.

<sup>101</sup> James T. Johnson, *Ideology, Reason, and the Limitation of War: Religious and Secular Concepts (1200–1740)* (Princeton, 1975), p. 31.

<sup>102</sup> Prosperi, *America*, p. 221.

humanist and chivalric notion of glory and honour to the discussion of the holy and just war against non-Catholics.<sup>103</sup> Thus, for the defenders of the idea of the 'holy war' religion was a just reason for fighting against 'heretics' as well as 'infidels' and an obligation for all good Christians. As Friedrich Wilhelm Graf highlighted, the concept of 'holy war' always remained vague and open to many interpretations and therefore was ideal for legitimising any recourse to arms as a war in the name of religion. The concept of 'just war', on the other hand, had been developed much more systematically in Christian theology.<sup>104</sup>

Based on Thomist thought, the second scholastics resolutely refuted 'canonist arguments' that war was a just means for princes to punish 'heretics' outside their jurisdiction. Firstly, religion did not constitute a just reason for waging war against non-Catholic sovereigns. And secondly, a prince could not wage any just war against the subjects of another ruler since, in Thomist thought, just war 'by definition dealt with conflicts between (sovereign) princes'.<sup>105</sup> The Jesuits and second scholastics Luis de Molina (1536–1600) and Francisco Suárez (1548–1617) in particular rejected Alfonso de Castro's opinion that 'the desire' to return a 'heretic' to the fold of the Catholic Church was 'a just intention', that 'heretics could not exercise legitimate political power and that according to canon law war was a means of just punishment for their heresy'.<sup>106</sup> In 1593, at a time when Philip II was waging war against the excommunicate Henry Bourbon in France, Molina emphasised that the Spanish king did not have any jurisdiction in the French kingdom and therefore it was not his responsibility or duty to punish offences committed against God in France.<sup>107</sup>

Similarly, in the early seventeenth century, Suárez also rejected the opinion of Castro and other canonists who regarded religion as a just reason for waging war against 'heretics'.<sup>108</sup> Yet Suárez also argued that Catholic rulers had the right to punish 'heretics' who lived within their jurisdiction. Because these 'heretics' were subjects of their prince rather than sovereigns in their own right, the punishment of 'heretical' subjects by a

<sup>103</sup> Catto, *Cristiani*, pp. 5, 33–37; Prosperi, 'La guerra', pp. 255–258. For the notion of glory in humanist thought, see also: Tuck, *Rights*, pp. 28–29.

<sup>104</sup> Friedrich Wilhelm Graf, 'Sakralisierung von Kriegen: Begriffs- und problemgeschichtliche Erwägungen', in Schreiner (ed.), *Heilige Kriege*, pp. 1–30.

<sup>105</sup> Nicole Reinhardt, 'Just war, royal conscience and the crisis of theological counsel in the early seventeenth century', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 18 (2014), p. 501.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 502, footnote 21.

<sup>107</sup> Luis de Molina, *De iustitia tomus primus, complectens tractatum primum, et ex secundo disputationes 251 usq[ue] ad ultimas voluntates inclusive* (Cuenca, 1593), p. 631 (Tract. Secundus, Disp. 106). See also: Reinhardt, 'Just war', p. 502. See also: Norbert Brieskorn, 'Luis de Molinas Weiterentwicklung der Kriegsethik und des Kriegsrechts der Scholastik', in Brieskorn and Riedenauer (eds.), *Suche*, vol. I, pp. 167–190.

<sup>108</sup> Reinhardt, 'Just war', pp. 503–504. See also: Rainer Specht, 'Francisco Suárez über den Krieg', in Brieskorn and Riedenauer (eds.), *Suche*, vol. I, pp. 199–205; Kremer, *Frieden*, pp. 227–235; Johnson, *Ideology*, pp. 163–168.

sovereign prince did not belong in the discussion of just war: as mentioned, in Thomist thought just war could only be waged between sovereign princes.<sup>109</sup> Still, separated from the subject of just war, Suárez did also address the existence of 'heretical' sovereigns in the international power system and defended the position that the pope possessed the authority to depose them.

Like Bellarmine's defence of the pope's *potestas indirecta*, Suárez's thought on the papal deposition of 'heretical' princes needs to be understood within the context of the controversy between King James VI/I and the Holy See over the Oath of Allegiance.<sup>110</sup> In *De fide*, Suárez stressed that the pope had jurisdiction over 'heretical' rulers because baptism still bound them to the Church. Consequently, the pontiff had the authority to condemn princes for their heresy and to 'deprive' them 'of their right to govern', just as he could deprive any other 'heretic' of his or her property. Suárez's did however not clearly state whether the excommunication of a 'heretical' ruler automatically implied that Catholic princes had the duty to wage war on such a formally deposed 'heretical' sovereign in order to put the papal deposition into practice. As Nicole Reinhardt pointed out, the Spanish Jesuit only mentioned in 'one single line' that it was 'a "probable" opinion' that Catholic rulers 'might wage such a war *upon papal commitment*, but he did not explore this point at any length'.<sup>111</sup> Therefore, early modern humanists, canonists and second scholastics clearly disagreed in their assessment whether there was any such concept as a just or holy war against 'heretics' and whether it was the duty of good Catholic princes to defend the Catholic cause by waging war against 'heretical' rulers.

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Mediaeval canon law forbade Christians having contact with 'heretics' but Aquinas deemed that exceptions should be made for persons strong in faith since they might be able to convert and thus save the souls of 'heretics'. The Council of Constance and Pope Martin V lifted the strict ban in mediaeval canon law which forbade the faithful to enter into contact with individuals who had incurred the major excommunication *latae sententiae*: the faithful only had to shun those who had been declared as excommunicated *nominatim* by the Church. Thus, the council and the pope set a precedent which, after the Reformation,

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<sup>109</sup> Reinhardt, 'Just war', pp. 501, 503.

<sup>110</sup> Kremer, *Frieden*, pp. 24, 234–235, 242–243. See also Turchetti, *Tyrannie*, pp. 549–550; Gerald Hartung, 'Die politische Theologie des Francisco Suárez: Zum Verhältnis von Religion und Politik in der Spätscholastik', in Manfred Walther (ed.), *Religion und Politik: Zu Theorie und Praxis des theologisch-politischen Komplexes* (Baden–Baden, 2004), pp. 113–126.

<sup>111</sup> Reinhardt, 'Just war', p. 503. See also: Kremer, *Frieden*, pp. 241–242.

allowed for the argument that it was permissible for Catholic sovereigns to establish diplomatic contact with 'heretical' rulers for as long as they had not been excommunicated by the pope.

In the early modern period, Catholic thinkers such as Laetmatius, Bragaccia and Becanus considered dealings with 'heretics' as permissible by the *ius gentium* but Becanus and Bragaccia advised Catholics to avoid contact with them whenever possible. Laetmatius and Bragaccia in particular underlined that contacts with 'heretics' could and should have advantages for the Catholic faith, such as the conversion of 'heretics'. While Laetmatius argued that Catholics did not have to keep their word given to Protestants if an agreement damaged Catholicism, Molanus and Becanus emphasised that they were obliged to keep their *fides*. Becanus however also emphasised that the pope had the authority to declare an agreement as invalid for religious reasons. Thus, while these Catholic thinkers deemed that Protestants possessed legal rights, be it as private individuals or as sovereign princes in the international power system, they still regarded contact with 'heretics' as potentially dangerous and considered such contacts as justifiable only if they also entailed advantages for the Catholic religion.

The opinion of early modern thinkers on how Catholic princes should deal with 'heretical' subjects and rulers varied greatly. There were humanist defenders of moderation towards 'heretics' who thought that Catholics, like the early Christians, should inspire 'heretics' to convert by Christian charity, patience and piety. Canonists like Alfonso de Castro advocated that good Catholics had to wage a holy war against 'heretics' based on the notions of 'guilt' and on vindictive justice which they found in the Old Testament, in canon law and in passages of Aquinas's work. Others, for example the Jesuit Possevino, imported chivalric and humanist notions of glory to religious war as a just and holy war.

More systematically, second scholastics further developed the Thomist concept of 'just war' and denied that religion was a legitimate reason for waging war against non-Catholic sovereigns. Since a just war could only be waged between sovereign powers in Thomist thought, the second scholastics Molina and Suárez also rejected the claims of canonist thinkers like Castro that Catholic princes could punish 'heretical' subjects of other princes. The Jesuits Bellarmine, Suárez and Becanus defended the authority of the Holy See to intervene in the temporal sphere in spiritual matters. Yet, Suárez did not clearly specify whether the excommunication of a ruler automatically signified that Catholic rulers had to wage war against such an excommunicated 'heretical' prince in order to put the papal deposition into effect. Becanus deemed that the pope had the authority to decide whether agreements or laws which affected religious affairs were valid but he also insisted that a

pope had to pronounce a judgment on the validity of such agreements as soon as he had learnt that they had been concluded.

Overall, depending on the scholarly tradition to which early modern Catholic thinkers belonged, they gave preference to different sets of sources in support of their arguments. Consequently, they largely differed in their opinions whether Catholic princes should, could or even had to wage war against 'heretical' or excommunicated rulers. The same is true for opinions whether Catholic rulers should restore religious unity within their commonwealths by punishing and killing 'heretical' subjects or whether they could and should grant temporary religious liberties to 'heretical' subjects, especially if they were not in a military or political position to suppress heresy within their jurisdiction.

When Clement VIII learnt in 1599 that the *Parlement de Paris* had registered the Edict of Nantes, the pope had a fit of anger: the pontiff protested that this edict 'permitted liberty of conscience to everyone, which was the worst thing in the world' and expressed his deep resentment that Henry IV had 'made pass an edict in favour of the heretics against the Catholics' by the *Parlement*.<sup>112</sup> The Aldobrandini pontiff, however, realised that it would be 'illusionary to believe that there would be an immediate possibility for a revocation' of the edict. The pontiff also deemed that it was better not to 'attack' Henry 'too directly' since he did not want to alienate him and therefore eventually decided that it was best to 'ignore purely and simply' the 'existence' of the Edict of Nantes.<sup>113</sup> While the pope resented that a Catholic ruler granted liberties to his 'heretical' subjects, he did obviously not object to any attempts by Catholic princes to make Protestant sovereigns permit the free practice of Catholic worship in their dominions. This thesis explores to what degree Clement VIII insisted that transconfessional peace agreements had to contain articles which granted religious concessions for the Catholic religion.

This doctoral thesis scrutinises what advice Clement VIII gave Catholic rulers who saw themselves compelled to consider making peace with Protestants and how they responded to the pope's advice. It explores in more detail Clement VIII's attitude towards peace negotiations and agreements between Catholic princes and 'heretical' powers, be they an excommunicated ruler (Elisabeth I), a Protestant sovereign (James VI/I) or powers who

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<sup>112</sup> Amelot de la Houssaie (ed.), *Lettres du cardinal d'Ossat, avec des notes historiques et politiques*, vol. III (Amsterdam, 1708), pp. 318–319. See also: Lecler, *Histoire*, vol. II, p. 125. For Clement VIII's response to the publication and registration of the Edict of Nantes, see: Bernard Barbiche, 'Clément VIII et la France (1592–1605): principes et réalités dans les instructions générales et les correspondances diplomatiques du Saint-Siège', in Lutz (ed.), *Papsttum*, pp. 102–102, 107–108. See also: Bertrand Haan (ed.), *Correspondance du nonce en France: Gasparo Silingardi évêque de Modène (1599–1601)* (Rome, 2002), pp. 87–91; Bertrand Haan, 'Les réactions du Saint-Siège à l'édit de Nantes', in Michel Grandjean and Bernard Roussel (eds.), *Coexister dans l'intolérance: l'édit de Nantes (1598)* (Geneva, 1998), pp. 353–368.

<sup>113</sup> Barbiche, 'Clément VIII et la France', p. 108. See also: Lecler, *Histoire*, vol. II, p. 126.

were *de facto* but not necessarily *de iure* sovereign (the Dutch 'rebels' and Duke Charles of Södermanland). It also analyses the role which religion had to play in such agreements in Clement VIII's opinion and to what degree the pope and other princes deemed that the pope could and should become involved in such transconfessional peace negotiations.



## The papacy and 'heretics': the 'institutional' context

The pope was, as Paolo Prodi emphasised, 'the established lawmaker of the universal Church'.<sup>114</sup> Recent research, however, has also demonstrated that, over the course of the second half of the sixteenth century, the influence of the Holy Office at the Roman curia had increased to such a degree that it even infringed on the papal authority to decide in doctrinal, ecclesiastical as well as international religio-political affairs. Thus, arguably, the increasing power of the Roman inquisition at the papal curia undermined the pope's position as supreme judge in matters of faith.<sup>115</sup> This thesis concentrates on Clement VIII as a political and diplomatic actor in the international power system rather than on institutional mechanisms at the Roman curia. Nevertheless, it is necessary to bear in mind that the religio-political policies of Clement VIII towards transconfessional peace agreements which this thesis analyses were most likely met with opposition at the papal court, in particular by the cardinals of the *Sant'Ufficio*. Yet, it is also necessary to emphasise that the Aldobrandini pontiff decidedly counteracted resistance to his policies.

This chapter shortly overviews the development of the papal diplomatic network and highlights that the Roman inquisition managed to gain an increasing influence on international papal politics and diplomacy over the course of the second half of the sixteenth century. It shows that Clement VIII continued the diplomatic missionary initiatives of his predecessors. This chapter also underlines that Clement departed from the position of intransigence which the Holy Office tried to impose on papal international religio-political policies and explains how he countered opposition to his decision to absolve the excommunicated French king, Henry IV. It also discusses which individuals at the papal curia were able to exert influence on Clement as close advisers and how the papal secretariat of state was organised during the Aldobrandini pontificate. This chapter therefore situates Clement VIII's international political and diplomatic activities within the general trend of the religio-political policies of the papacy in the second half of the

<sup>114</sup> Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice*, p. 134.

<sup>115</sup> Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, pp. 196–286; Fragnito, *Proibito capire*, pp. 27–80; Gotor, *I beati*, pp. 151–155.

sixteenth century and in particular within the attempts of the Roman inquisition to determine the direction of papal politics and diplomacy.

The development of the papal diplomatic network from temporary diplomatic missions to permanent nunciatures in the early modern period has been well-studied.<sup>116</sup> As Paolo Prodi observed, the first nunciatures, which were established around 1500, constituted a means for the Holy See to affirm the papacy's universalist claim to primacy in its diplomatic relations with other powers.<sup>117</sup> Still, as Maria Antonietta Visceglia highlighted 'the real turning point from an institutional perspective occurred under the papacies of Pius IV and Gregory XIII' (r. 1572–1585) who recognised that, if the Holy See wanted to exert its political and diplomatic influence abroad, it needed to extend its diplomatic network more systematically and to establish more permanent nunciatures.<sup>118</sup> Some early modern Catholic powers, France and Venice most famously, maintained formal diplomatic relations with Protestant princes and the Ottoman sultan; the papacy's nunciature network, conversely, did not extend to these powers which the Holy See regarded as the arch-enemies of the Catholic faith within and without of the *respublica christiana*.<sup>119</sup>

As explained in the previous chapter, according to mediaeval canon law, Protestant princes were not legitimate rulers: their fall from the Catholic faith signified that they automatically incurred the major excommunication and thus were unable to fulfil their public office as rulers. Most early modern popes therefore refused to establish diplomatic contact with 'heretical' princes since this would have implied that the Holy See recognised them as rightful rulers. Moreover, most early modern popes instructed papal representatives and their *famiglia* at Catholic courts to avoid all contact with 'heretics'. The nuncios or legates were, however, allowed to talk to 'heretics' if there was a serious prospect of a conversion.<sup>120</sup> A notable exception to this papal refusal to establish diplomatic contact with Protestant princes occurred during the pontificate of Pius IV who broke with the religious and political intransigent position of his predecessor, Paul IV.<sup>121</sup>

In late 1560, Pius IV sent the later cardinal Giovanni Francesco Commendone (1524–

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<sup>116</sup> E.g.: Henry Biaudet, *Les nonciatures apostoliques permanentes jusqu'en 1648* (Helsinki, 1910); Pierre Blet, *Histoire de la représentation diplomatique du Saint-Siège, des origines à l'aube du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Vatican City, 1990), pp. 159–384; Barbiche, *Bulla*, passim. See also the essays in: Alexander Koller (ed.), *Kurie und Politik: Stand und Perspektiven der Nuntiaturberichtsforschung* (Tübingen, 1998). On the roles played by religious orders in diplomacy: Massimo Carlo Giannini (ed.), *Papacy, Religious Orders, and International Politics in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Rome, 2013). For further references see: Visceglia, 'The international policy', pp. 32–35.

<sup>117</sup> Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice*, pp. 308–344; Visceglia, 'The international policy', pp. 27, 32.

<sup>118</sup> Visceglia, 'The international policy', p. 33.

<sup>119</sup> Koller, *Imperator*, p. 279.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., pp. 397–398; Peter Schmidt, 'Inquisition und Zensur in der Kölner Nuntiatur', in Alexander Koller (ed.), *Die Aussenbeziehungen der römischen Kurie unter Paul V. Borghese (1605–1621)* (Tübingen, 2008), p. 414; Bonora, 'L'archivio', pp. 997–998; Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, pp. 196–207.

<sup>121</sup> Visceglia, 'The international policy', p. 34.

1584) to the Holy Roman Empire where he had to present the bull which announced the resumption of the Council of Trent to Catholic and Protestant princes. Commendone even intended to travel to the courts of the Protestant kings of Denmark and Sweden. The former, however, denied Commendone entry into his kingdom while the latter sent him a safe-conduct but also informed the papal representative that he was on the point of departing for England.<sup>122</sup> Eventually, the final two years of Pius IV's reign were overshadowed by 'grave tensions' which arose from the pope's plans to return French Huguenots and Protestants in the empire to the fold of the Apostolic See by temporary religious concessions. As a consequence, 'cardinals, ambassadors at the curia, and Jesuit missionaries in the periphery' secretly discussed conspiracies and accused Pius IV of heresy.<sup>123</sup>

Pius IV's moderate attitude towards 'heretics' and his attempts to win 'heretical' rulers back for the Church by diplomatic rather than military means were instantly reversed by his successor.<sup>124</sup> As seen, early in Pius V's reign, in 1567, there were papal curialists who thought that 'heretics' should be converted not by physical coercion but by peaceful methods (Chapter 1). Pius V, however, decidedly steered the course of papal politics and diplomacy towards a position of religious intransigence.

Pius V had barely been elected pope when, in early 1566, he forbade all papal representatives to enter into any contact with Protestant princes and refused to establish any 'diplomatic relations with sovereigns whose orthodoxy was not certain'.<sup>125</sup> after his election, the precept according to which individuals who conversed with 'heretics' were suspect of heresy themselves became an essential 'criterion of government'.<sup>126</sup> Papal representatives and legates who had implemented Pius IV's accommodating policy towards 'heretics' therefore became discredited during the pontificate of Pius V. Moreover, after the accession of the supreme inquisitor Michele Ghislieri to the papal throne, the Holy Office's sphere of influence was extended to the papacy's religious and religio-political European policies and diplomacy. During Pius V's reign, the Roman inquisition also started to watch the activities of the papal nuncios and legates at courts in confessionally divided commonwealths and

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<sup>122</sup> Domenico Caccamo, 'Commendone, Giovanni Francesco', *DBI*, 27 (1982), pp. 608–609; Visceglia, 'The international policy', p. 34.

<sup>123</sup> Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, pp. 249–250. For details on the conspiracies and accusations of heresy against Pius IV, see: *ibid.*, pp. 250–263; Elena Bonora, *Roma 1564: la congiura contro il papa* (Rome, 2011). See also: Vincenzo Lavenia, 'Il papa eretico: per una storia della sovranità dei pontefici', in Vincenzo Lavenia and Giovanna Paolin (eds.), *Per Adriano Prosperi*, vol. III (*Riti di passaggio, storie di giustizia*) (Pisa, 2011), pp. 219–241.

<sup>124</sup> Visceglia, 'The international policy', p. 34.

<sup>125</sup> Bonora, "'Ubique'", p. 69.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66–67. See also: Bonora, 'L'archivio', pp. 997–998; Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, pp. 196–207; Schmidt, 'Inquisition', p. 414.

continued to do so well into the seventeenth century.<sup>127</sup> Furthermore, as mentioned in the General Introduction, the pope excommunicated Elizabeth I in 1569. As Elena Bonora observed, Pius V, a former Dominican friar, 'brought into the European theatre of diplomatic relations and mediation policies mental schemata and political values that belonged to the theological culture of the mendicant orders' which had been 'the results of a centuries' long struggle against heresy'.<sup>128</sup>

Pius V's successor, Gregory XIII, did not always automatically and unreservedly collaborate with the Roman inquisition but the Holy Office still continued to exercise a pre-eminent role in papal policies during the Boncompagni pontificate.<sup>129</sup> Gregory XIII significantly expanded the papal diplomatic network by sending representatives to the Spanish Netherlands, southern Germany, Graz and Cologne.<sup>130</sup> The individuals whom the popes sent to these 'reform nunciatures' were especially charged to fulfil religious tasks in addition to their political mission: they had to defend ecclesiastical jurisdiction and religious orthodoxy, to return religious deviants to the fold of the Catholic Church whenever possible and to exhort rulers to implement the Tridentine decrees.<sup>131</sup> Gregory XIII also dedicated himself to establishing colleges of several *nationes* in Rome which, up to the creation of the *Propaganda Fide* (1622), prepared individuals from these *nationes* for 'a spiritual *missio* and even for martyrdom' among 'heretics' and in territories occupied by the Ottomans.<sup>132</sup>

Sixtus V resumed Gregory XIII's missionary efforts but 'it was in Europe that the religious conflict in France completely absorbed his abundant reserves of energy'. Sixtus V concluded the inquisitorial proceedings against the Calvinist relapse and pretender to the French crown, Henry Bourbon, and excommunicated him in the bull *Ab immensa aeterni* (9 September 1585). The pontiff thus formally deposed Henry Bourbon as king of Navarre and deprived him of his rights to succeed the heirless Henry III (r. 1574–1589) as French king.<sup>133</sup> Clement VIII continued the 'universalist policies' of his predecessors but also deviated from their uncompromising religio-political position.<sup>134</sup>

During Clement VIII's reign, the papacy successfully negotiated the reunion of the

<sup>127</sup> Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, pp. 196–207; Bonora, "'Ubique'", passim; Bonora, 'L'archivio', pp. 997–998; Bonora, 'Il sospetto', pp. 45–48. For the lasting influence of the Roman inquisition on the nuncio network, see: Schmidt, 'Inquisition', passim; Irene Fosi, 'Frontiere inquisitoriali nel Sacro Romano Impero', in Visceglia (ed.), *Papato*, pp. 257–274; Visceglia, 'The international policy', p. 37.

<sup>128</sup> Quoted and translated in: Visceglia, 'The international policy', p. 36.

<sup>129</sup> Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, pp. 213–237.

<sup>130</sup> Visceglia, 'The international policy', pp. 34–35. For the history of these 'reform nunciatures' see also: Blet, *Histoire*, pp. 275–334.

<sup>131</sup> Visceglia, 'The international policy', pp. 35–36.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid.

Coptic and the Ruthenian Churches with the Roman Catholic Church in 1593 and 1595/1596 respectively.<sup>135</sup> Clement also sent an envoy to the 'schismatic' grand-duke of Moscow in order to make him join the war against the Ottomans. Moreover, in early 1601, Clement charged the priest Francisco da Costa and the layman Diego de Miranda with a mission to the Muslim Shah Abbas I (r. 1588–1629) after they had reported rumours that the shah, under the influence of one of his wives who adhered to the 'schismatic' Gregorian Church, intended to convert to the Christian faith. The envoys had to determine whether the shah wished the pope to send missionaries to Persia, to encourage his conversion and to convince him to attack his rival, the Ottoman sultan. The mission, however, failed completely: the rumours that Abbas I intended to convert had been false and constant quarrels between Costa and Miranda caused grave scandals which undermined their credibility as papal envoys and, consequently, their entire mission.<sup>136</sup> Clement VIII thus continued a long-standing tradition of papal contacts with 'schismatics' and non-Christians which dated back to the Middle Ages.<sup>137</sup> the pope hoped that the former could be reconciled with the Church and the latter converted to the 'true' religion. The Aldobrandini pontiff combined these efforts with plans to defeat the Ottoman empire by simultaneous military attacks on several fronts. As parts two and three of this thesis will show, the pope's desire to make Catholic rulers warding off the advancing Ottomans also had a significant impact on Clement's attitude towards peaceful relations between Catholics and Protestants.

Clement VIII broke with the policy of religious intransigence of the inquisitor popes Paul IV, Pius V and Sixtus V and tried to restrain the immense influence which the Holy Office had gained on the religio-political policies of the papacy over the course of the second half of the sixteenth century. Ippolito Aldobrandini had made his career at the papal curia as auditor of the Rota and had earned himself a reputation as a skilful diplomat, politician and peacemaker during a peace legation to Poland. This non-inquisitorial background 'rendered him "suspicious" or at least little welcome to the cardinals of the Holy Office' who feared that the new pontiff might not be willing to follow 'their strategies and their political and religious goals'.<sup>138</sup> These fears were not unjustified.

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<sup>135</sup> Josef Metzler, 'Die Missionsinitiativen und Unionsbemühungen in den Hauptinstruktionen Clemens' VIII.', in Lutz (ed.), *Papsttum*, pp. 44–45.

<sup>136</sup> Carlos Alonso, 'Una embajada de Clemente VIII a Persia (1600–1609)', *Archivum Historiae Pontificiae*, 34 (1996), pp. 7–125; JAITNER, vol. II, pp. 655–661. See also the brief for the shah in: Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIV (Clement VIII (1592–1605)) (London, 1933 ed.), pp. 571–574.

<sup>137</sup> Muldoon, *Popes*, passim.

<sup>138</sup> Gigliola Fragnito, '"Sa Sainteté se resoudra par l'avis des cardinaux de l'Inquisition sans lesquels il n'oseroit rien faire": Clemente VIII, il Sant'Ufficio e Enrico IV di Borbone', *Schifanoia*, 38–39 (2010) [2011], pp. 143–144. For a concise overview of Ippolito Aldobrandini's career, see: Agostino Borromeo, 'Clemente VIII', *DBI*, 26 (1982), pp. 259–263; JAITNER, vol. I, pp. LXX–LXXXI. For Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini's legation to Poland, see: Pastor, *History*, vol. XXII (Sixtus V–Innocent IX) (London, 1932 ed.), pp. 169–174.

Clement VIII tried to restrict the influence of the Roman inquisition and its cardinal-secretary – Cardinal Giulio Antonio Santori (1532–1602), who nearly became pope in 1592 – on his policies.<sup>139</sup> For example, Clement VIII defended the supreme authority of the Holy See to interpret and define Church doctrine against the Spanish king and the Spanish inquisition. At the same time, the Aldobrandini pontiff tried to side-line the very congregation which was in charge of watching over doctrinal orthodoxy in the Catholic Church – the Roman inquisition – and to marginalise the influence of Santori by delegating the matter to a special commission, the congregation *De auxiliis*.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, Italian scholars have significantly furthered our understanding of Clement's efforts to rein in the influence of Santori and of the cardinals of the Holy Office, at least when they opposed his religious and religio-political policies, in numerous studies on the publication of the sixto-clementine index of prohibited books and on the pope's decision to lift the excommunication of Henry IV.<sup>141</sup>

### ***Clement VIII's absolution of Henry IV and policy-making at the papal curia***

In recent years, scholars have emphasised Ippolito Aldobrandini's connections with the circle of the Roman Oratory of Filippo Neri (1515–1595, canonised 1622) which, based on the principles of Christian humanism, taught Christian piety and the return to the exemplary life of Christ in Rome. Especially in the early years of his pontificate, Clement VIII listened to the advice of core members of the Oratory, such as Cesare Baronio (1538–1607) and the Jesuit Francisco Toledo (1532–1596).<sup>142</sup> These men acted as close advisers of Clement VIII when the pontiff started to alter his attitude towards Henry Bourbon who, after Henry III's assassination in 1589, had been pursuing his claims to the French crown by military means.

After Henry's conversion in July 1593 and after the Ottoman sultan had declared war

<sup>139</sup> For the conclave of 1592, see: Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIII (Clement VIII (1592–1605)) (London, 1933 ed.), pp. 10–18; Saverio Ricci, *Il sommo inquisitore: Giulio Antonio Santori tra autobiografia e storia (1532–1602)* (Rome, 2002), pp. 372–375; Günther Wassilowsky, *Die Konklavereform Gregors XV. (1621/22): Wertekonflikte, symbolische Inszenierung und Verfahrenswandel im posttridentinischen Papsttum* (Stuttgart, 2010), pp. 97–99.

<sup>140</sup> Broggio, *La teologia*, pp. 84–85, 104–105. See also: Maria Antonietta Visceglia, *Roma papale e Spagna: diplomatici, nobili e religiosi tra due corti* (Rome, 2010), p. 202.

<sup>141</sup> E.g.: Vittorio Frajese, *Nascita dell'Indice: la censura ecclesiastica dal Rinascimento alla Controriforma* (Brescia, 2006), pp. 139–181; Fragnito, "'Sa Sainteté'", passim; Gigliola Fragnito, 'Diplomazia pontificia e censura ecclesiastica durante il regno di Enrico IV', *Rinascimento*, 42 (2002), pp. 143–167; Fragnito, *Proibito capire*, pp. 45–80; Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, pp. 247–250; Ricci, *Il sommo inquisitore*, pp. 325–337, 380–420; Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, pp. 19–94. For instances in which Clement VIII and the Roman inquisition did closely collaborate, see: Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, pp. 30–31; Paolo Simoncelli, 'Clemente VIII e alcuni provvedimenti del Sant'Uffizio (*De Italitis habitantibus in partibus haereticorum*)', *Critica Storica*, 13 (1976), pp. 129–172.

<sup>142</sup> Vittorio Frajese, 'Tendenze dell'ambiente Oratoriano durante il pontificato di Clemente VIII: prime considerazioni e linee di ricerca', *Roma moderna e contemporanea*, 3 (1995), pp. 57–80; Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, p. 4; Wassilowsky, *Konklavereform*, p. 168. For Neri and the Oratorio, see: Antonio Cistellini, *San Filippo Neri: l'oratorio e la congregazione oratoriana. Storia e spiritualità*, 3 vols. (Brescia, 1989).

on Emperor Rudolf II in August 1593, Clement asked the Spanish king to support his Habsburg relatives against the Ottomans and pointed out that 'the fury of the Turks' posed a bigger 'common danger' than 'the heretics in France'.<sup>143</sup> Still, Clement VIII initially remained reluctant to absolve Henry IV and thus to render his claim to the French crown legitimate from a canon law perspective. Filippo Neri and other Francophile members of the Roman Oratory, however, convinced Clement VIII to lift Henry's excommunication.<sup>144</sup> The pope's close theological adviser and confessor, Baronio, in particular exerted considerable influence on the pope during the decisive negotiations at the papal curia which terminated in Henry IV's absolution on 17 September 1595.<sup>145</sup>

As Peter A. Mazur recently underlined, Baronio persuaded the pontiff that only God could see into the heart of individuals and that 'heretics' who had feigned their conversion for temporal gains or other dishonest reasons would not escape the divine judgment. The Church historian Baronio argued that it was the pope's prerogative 'to "allow the buckle of discipline to loosen" in the case of one sinner in order to ensure the salvation of the rest, and when the Church relaxed its discipline in the pursuit of heretics, the result was often that they and their followers ended up embracing true religion'.<sup>146</sup> Mazur stressed that Baronio's Francophile political motivations certainly resonated in this piece of advice but also convincingly demonstrated that Baronio was not motivated by purely political considerations: Baronio's advice should be understood within his broader contribution to the formulation of a new, more moderate papal policy which aimed at the conversion of Protestants, mainly on the Italian peninsula.<sup>147</sup>

Similarly, Vittorio Frajese pointed out that Baronio deemed that religious toleration should be condemned in almost all circumstances, except in cases of necessity where tolerance could prevent an even greater evil. This 'doctrine set a precedence and can be considered as the most favourable formulation of explicit tolerance in the environment of Rome in this period'.<sup>148</sup> Arguably, Baronio's advice to the pope to use moderation towards

<sup>143</sup> JAITNER, vol. I, p. 160. See also: Visceglia, *Roma papale*, p. 78.

<sup>144</sup> Frajese, 'Tendenze', pp. 60–62.

<sup>145</sup> For these negotiations, see: Alain Tallon, 'Henri IV and the papacy after the League', in Alison Forrestal and Eric Nelson (eds.), *Politics and Religion in Early Bourbon France* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 21–27; Cornel Zwielerlein, "'convertire tutta l'Alemagna": Fürstenkonversionen in den Strategiedienkräften der römischen Europapolitik um 1600. Zum Verhältnis von "Machiavellismus" und "Konfessionalismus"', in Ute Lotz-Heumann, Jan-Friedrich Missfelder and Matthias Pohl (eds.), *Konversion und Konfession in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Gütersloh, 2007), pp. 67–73; Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, pp. 19–94; Victor Martin, 'La reprise des relations diplomatiques entre la France et le Saint-Siège, en 1595', *Revue des sciences religieuses*, 1 (1921), pp. 338–384 and 2 (1922), pp. 233–270.

<sup>146</sup> Peter A. Mazur, 'Searcher of hearts: Cesare Baronio's History of Conversion', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 75 (2014), p. 219.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., p. 216.

<sup>148</sup> Frajese, 'Tendenze', p. 61. See more generally: Irene Fosi, *Convertire lo straniero: Forestieri e Inquisizione a Roma in età moderna* (Rome, 2011).

Henry IV in France and towards potential converts on the Italian peninsula also inspired Clement VIII's other religio-political policies which this thesis addresses. The new direction of Clement's French policy did not remain unopposed by individuals who, like Santori, insisted on a position of religious and political intransigence towards all religious deviants and who defended the interests of Philip II at the papal curia. Clement VIII, however, would not allow other members of the curia to cross his decision.

After Clement VIII had resolved to absolve Henry IV, he repelled adverse opinions expressed in a meeting of the Roman inquisition in summer 1594. From that time onwards, the pontiff decisively marginalised the influence of the Holy Office on the affairs which related to Henry's absolution: the pope simply no longer kept the *Sant'Ufficio* up-to-date on the matter. Instead, he only allowed his two cardinal-nephews and Cardinal Toledo to become involved in this affair.<sup>149</sup> When the Spanish ambassador in Rome, Cardinal Santori and the Spanish canonist Francisco Peña (c. 1540–1612) tried to obstruct Henry's absolution in the last minute in summer 1595, Clement took firm measures against the opposition to his new French policy.<sup>150</sup>

In late July 1595, Peña presented a memorandum to Clement VIII in which he argued that the pope should not lift Henry's excommunication.<sup>151</sup> According to Peña, Henry had faked his conversion and was persisting in his heresy: after all, he still treated the Calvinists kindly and even showed himself inclined towards granting them the liberty to practise their 'false' religion.<sup>152</sup> The Spanish canonist emphasised that, even if Henry had truly and sincerely converted to the Catholic faith, granting religious toleration to 'heretics' was an act of heresy in itself since the Church had always 'equalled the supporters of religious tolerance to the heretics whom they protected'.<sup>153</sup> Peña resolutely rejected the argument that the adverse state of affairs in a commonwealth could ever justify the toleration of 'heretics'.<sup>154</sup> On the contrary, Peña underlined that the pope 'should never refrain from persecuting heretics, even if by pardoning one of them he could have maintained peace in the Catholic world'.<sup>155</sup> Clement VIII objected to the memorandum for political reasons as well as for the implications which they had on the pope's position as supreme judge in

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<sup>149</sup> Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, pp. 57–58.

<sup>150</sup> Stefania Tutino, 'A Spanish canonist in Rome: notes on the career of Francisco Peña', *California Italian Studies*, 5 (2014), pp. 419–421; Frajese, *Nascita*, pp. 164–166.

<sup>151</sup> Frajese, *Nascita*, pp. 164–165; Tutino, 'A Spanish canonist', pp. 420–421; Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, pp. 245–250; Ricci, *Il sommo inquisitore*, pp. 330–331; Vittorio Frajese, 'Regno ecclesiastico e stato moderno: la polemica fra Francisco Peña e Roberto Bellarmino sull'esonazione dei clerici', *Annali dell'Istituto Storico Italo-Germanico in Trento*, 14 (1988), pp. 290–298.

<sup>152</sup> Tutino, 'A Spanish canonist', p. 420; Frajese, *Nascita*, p. 165.

<sup>153</sup> Ricci, *Il sommo inquisitore*, p. 331; Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, p. 248.

<sup>154</sup> Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, pp. 248–249.

<sup>155</sup> Tutino, 'A Spanish canonist', p. 420.



matters of faith.

Henry IV's military progress in France and his conversion had led to the consolidation of his rule in the French kingdom by 1595. Clement therefore was persuaded that political circumstances required Henry Bourbon's absolution and the re-establishment of peaceful relations between the kingdom of France and the papacy.<sup>156</sup> Clement deemed that this step could prevent a schism of the French Church and that the Catholic Church would only be able to regain lost ground in France if the kingdom was pacified.<sup>157</sup> From Henry's absolution also arose advantages for the pope as a temporal prince. Ever since France had to renounce its claims to Milan and Naples in the Peace Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559), Spain's influence had been increasing to unprecedented levels on the Italian peninsula while the French kings were largely absorbed by the religious and civil wars in France in the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>158</sup> For the pope, the absolution of Henry IV thus also offered an opportunity to create a French counter-balance to the Spanish influence at the papal curia and in Italy.<sup>159</sup> From Clement VIII's point of view, Henry's absolution therefore served the interest of the Papal States as well as the Catholic cause in France.

The pontiff also objected to Peña's memorandum since it challenged his authority as the supreme judge in religious matters. Peña argued that a pope could not make any 'exceptions in cases of heresy' and thus 'effectively denied the Pope the power to rehabilitate a heretic whenever the Pope thought it appropriate or expedient'.<sup>160</sup> Clement VIII could not accept that a member of the Roman curia advocated a position which restricted the pope's authority in such a manner and immediately initiated measures for countering Peña's arguments.<sup>161</sup>

The pontiff worked demonstratively in conjunction with the *Sant'Ufficio* but manipulated the decision-making process of the congregation of the Roman inquisition. Clement tasked Baronio – who, as mentioned, supported Henry's absolution – to examine Peña's memorandum. Unsurprisingly, Baronio backed the pope's decision to absolve the Bourbon prince. He deemed that the memorandum 'was not only doctrinally erroneous' but

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., p. 421.

<sup>157</sup> Visceglia, 'The international policy', p. 52.

<sup>158</sup> Thomas J. Dandeleit, *Spanish Rome (1500–1700)* (New Haven, 2001), p. 57; Klaus Jaitner, 'The popes and the struggle for power during the 16th and 17th centuries', in Klaus Bussmann and Heinz Schilling (eds.), *1648: War and Peace in Europe*, vol. I (Münster–Osnabrück, 1998), pp. 61–63. See also: Miles Pattenden, 'Rome as a "Spanish Avignon"? The Spanish faction and the monarchy of Philip II', in Piers Baker-Bates and Miles Pattenden (eds.), *The Spanish Presence in Sixteenth-Century Italy: Images of Iberia* (Farnham, 2015), pp. 65–84.

<sup>159</sup> Agostino Borromeo, 'Istruzioni generali e corrispondenza ordinaria dei nunzi: obiettivi prioritari e risultati concreti della politica spagnola di Clemente VIII', in Lutz (ed.), *Papsttum*, pp. 120–121.

<sup>160</sup> Tutino, 'A Spanish canonist', p. 421.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

that it even 'verged dangerously on heresy' and recommended the pontiff 'to ban the work and formally condemn its author'.<sup>162</sup> Subsequently, Clement charged the cardinals Costanzo da Sarnano (1531–1595) and Toledo, two cardinals of the Holy Office who favoured Henry's absolution, to evaluate Peña's memorandum and Baronio's censure of it: they approved of Baronio's censure and condemned Peña's memorandum.<sup>163</sup>

Based on Sarnano's and Toledo's expertise, the cardinals of the congregation of the Roman inquisition rejected the theses contained in Peña's memorandum and approved of Baronio's opinion that 'tolerating heretics was not an act of heresy'. Furthermore, they decided that inquisitorial proceedings against Peña should be initiated. Clement, however, ordered to suspend the opening of these proceedings in order to avoid additional tensions with Spain.<sup>164</sup> Clement VIII and his advisers thus astutely handled the opposition to Henry's absolution and the advocates of intransigence at the papal curia suffered a terrible blow. Peña and Cardinal Santori, the very cardinal–secretary of the Holy Office and principal defender of Philip II's French policy in Rome, were outmanoeuvred and defeated by Clement VIII and the Francophile members of the Roman Oratory. This example demonstrates that Clement and his advisers were able to counteract and, if necessary, even to censure opposition to their policies from within the papal curia.

Therefore, while Santori and other cardinals who insisted on religious intransigence most likely tried to advise Clement VIII against showing any sign of approval of cross-confessional peace agreements and maybe even opposed the pope's diplomatic initiatives which this study analyses, it seems unlikely that they were able to change the pope's policies once he had decided on a course of action. Moreover, even the influence of the core members of the *Oratorio* on the pope's policies decreased over the course of the Aldobrandini pontificate. They were eclipsed as advisers of Clement VIII in political matters by a rising star: Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini (1571–1621).

In September 1593, Clement VIII bestowed the cardinalate on two of his nephews: Pietro Aldobrandini and Cinzio Passeri Aldobrandini (1551–1610).<sup>165</sup> Pietro Aldobrandini was the younger of the two nephews but, as the son of Clement VIII's brother Pietro, he was also more closely related to the pope. Clement therefore gave him the title 'Cardinale Aldobrandini'. Cinzio, the son of Clement VIII's sister Giulia, on the other hand, was

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.; Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, pp. 71–72; Frajese, *Nascita*, p. 165; Frajese, 'Regno', pp. 293–298.

<sup>163</sup> Frajese, *Nascita*, p. 165; Tutino, 'A Spanish canonist', p. 421.

<sup>164</sup> Ricci, *Il sommo inquisitore*, p. 331; Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, p. 71; Frajese, 'Regno', pp. 293–298.

<sup>165</sup> For the two cardinal–nephews see: JAITNER, vol. I, pp. XCVI–CXXV; Elena Fasano Guarini, 'Aldobrandini (Passeri), Cinzio' and 'Aldobrandini, Pietro', *DBI*, 2 (1960), pp. 102–104 and 107–112 respectively; Tobias Mörschel, 'Von der Vergänglichkeit der Macht: Der Kardinalnepot Pietro Aldobrandini (1571–1621)', in Arne Karsten (ed.), *Jagd nach dem roten Hut: Kardinalskarrieren im barocken Rom* (Göttingen, 2004), pp. 88–104.

simply referred to as 'Cardinale di San Giorgio', that is, he was named after his titular church. Clement, who otherwise tried to treat his two nephews equally at the beginning of his pontificate, thus gave priority to Pietro Aldobrandini over his elder cousin Cinzio.

In the end, the diplomatic and political skills of Cardinal Aldobrandini earned him the pope's favour at the expense of Cardinal San Giorgio. From 1598 onwards, after he had successfully negotiated the reintegration of Ferrara into the Papal States, Cardinal Aldobrandini became *the* key figure ('l'uomo chiave') at the papal court.<sup>166</sup> In this position, the cardinal looked after the interests of his family which earned him Karel Stloukal's castigating description of 'a sleazy and unscrupulous diplomat, standing behind Clement VIII as Mephisto behind Faustus, spreading the shadow of his black wings and greedy goals year by year'.<sup>167</sup>

At the same time, the core members of the Roman Oratory lost their influence as Clement VIII's advisers, probably because they had supported the 'wrong' cardinal-nephew, San Giorgio, as the 'more educated' and 'more pious' of the two cardinal-nephews. The pontiff most likely also had started to resent their repeated critique that his initial dedication to the implementation of the Tridentine Reforms had slackened over time and Cardinal Toledo, who had exerted a decisive influence on the pontiff, had died in 1596.<sup>168</sup> Despite his increasing influence at the papal court, Cardinal Aldobrandini did not have free rein but could only act with the express or tacit consent of his papal uncle.<sup>169</sup> This was also the case in papal day-to-day diplomacy.

During Clement's pontificate, the papal secretariat of state was divided into two sectors, each of which was headed by one of the two cardinal-nephews as 'supremi secretarii'. Cardinal Aldobrandini was in charge of the correspondence which related to affairs in France, Spain, Flanders, Portugal, Savoy and Avignon. Cardinal San Giorgio headed the secretariat which dealt with the nunciatures at the imperial court, in Cologne, Graz, in the Catholic provinces of Switzerland, in Poland, Florence, Venice and Naples as well as the correspondence with smaller principalities on the Italian peninsula.<sup>170</sup> The

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<sup>166</sup> Klaus Jaitner, 'Il nepotismo di Papa Clemente VIII (1592–1605): Il dramma del cardinale Cinzio Aldobrandini', *Archivio Storico Italiano*, 146 (1988), pp. 58, 60–61, 70. See also: Birgit Emich, 'Verstaatlichung des Nepotismus: Der Heimfall Ferraras an den Kirchenstaat', in Daniel Büchel and Volker Reinhardt (eds.), *Modell Rom? Der Kirchenstaat und Italien in der Frühen Neuzeit* (Cologne, 2003), pp. 223–239.

<sup>167</sup> Karel Stloukal, *Papežská politika a císařský dvůr pražský na přelomu XVI. a XVII. věku* (Prague, 1925), p. 50. I am greatly indebted to Dr Filip Krajník for the translation of this quotation.

<sup>168</sup> Wassilowsky, *Konklavereform*, pp. 168–169; Klaus Jaitner, 'De officio primario summi pontificis: Eine Denkschrift Kardinal Bellarmins für Papst Clemens VIII. (Sept./Okt. 1600)', in Erwin Gatz (ed.), *Römische Kurie. Kirchliche Finanzen. Vatikanisches Archiv: Studien zu Ehren von Hermann Hoberg*, vol. I (Rome, 1979), pp. 379–380; Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, p. 358.

<sup>169</sup> Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, p. 357; Jaitner, 'Il nepotismo', p. 70.

<sup>170</sup> Jaitner, 'Il nepotismo', p. 61.

nuncios addressed their letters to the cardinal–nephew who was in charge of their nunciature and the replies of the Holy See bore the signature of the respective cardinal–nephew. From 1596/1597 onwards, however, most of the nuncios who were formally under the authority of Cardinal San Giorgio started to forward copies of their letters to the more influential Cardinal Aldobrandini.<sup>171</sup> Contrary to Hubert Jedin's assertion that the Aldobrandini pontiff left most matters of state in the hands of his nephews, Clement kept a close eye on ordinary political business.<sup>172</sup>

The pope was actively involved in the routine operation of the papal secretariat of state and, ultimately, reserved every decision to himself. The Aldobrandini pope read the letters of the nuncios, commented on them, provided the cardinal–nephews with instructions for their replies, wrote minutes for important letters and sent a significant amount of autographed letters to other rulers.<sup>173</sup> Equally, as Jaitner emphasised, the pope participated in the redaction of the general instructions for his nuncios and legates.<sup>174</sup> Clement VIII therefore reigned in person and in an absolutist manner. Already early in his pontificate, he only allowed a few confidants to advise him and although he tended to delay taking decisions, he used to take them alone.<sup>175</sup> Therefore, during the Aldobrandini pontificate, only a small group of close advisers exerted influence on the pope. In the end, the religio-political policies of the Holy See during the reign of Clement VIII reflect the policies of the pope himself.

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Although Pius IV pursued a policy of accommodation which aimed at returning Protestants to Rome by diplomatic means and by religious concessions, most early modern popes did not allow their representatives to have any contact with 'heretics', except when a 'heretic' intended to convert. The cardinal-secretary of the Holy Office, Michele Ghislieri, therefore put a quick end to Pius IV's efforts after his accession as Pope Pius V. In particular during the reigns of the inquisitor popes Paul IV, Pius V and Sixtus V, the Holy See adopted a

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 63.

<sup>172</sup> Hubert Jedin, 'Das Papsttum und die Durchführung des Tridentinums (1565–1605)', in Hubert Jedin (ed.), *Handbuch der Kirchengeschichte*, vol. IV (Reformation. Katholische Reform und Gegenreformation) (Freiburg, 1985 ed.), p. 532. See also: Zdeněk Kristen, 'Intorno alla partecipazione personale di Clemente VIII al disbrigo della corrispondenza politica (Contributo alla storia della Segreteria di Stato pontificia)', *Bollettino dell'Istituto storico cecoslovacco in Roma*, 1 (1937), pp. 29–33.

<sup>173</sup> Borromeo, 'Clemente VIII', p. 280; Helmut Jaschke, '"Das persönliche Regiment" Clemens' VIII.: Zur Geschichte des päpstlichen Staatssekretariats', *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und Kirchengeschichte*, 65 (1970), p. 143; Kristen, 'Intorno alla partecipazione', pp. 46–47.

<sup>174</sup> JAITNER, vol. I, pp. XXXVII, XL.

<sup>175</sup> Jaitner, 'Il nepotismo', pp. 69–70; Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, pp. 82–91.

rigorous stance towards 'heretics' and the pontiffs involved the Roman inquisition in international political affairs when religious matters were concerned. Therefore, as the papacy expanded its diplomatic network in an attempt to exert political influence on Catholic rulers and to assert the pope's claim to his universal position as the head of Christendom, the geographical sphere of influence of the Holy Office increased too.

During Clement VIII's pontificate, Cardinal Santori and individuals close to the Roman inquisition tried to defend the influence which the Holy Office had gained on the papacy's international religio-political policies over the course of the second half of the sixteenth century. Clement did ask for the advice of other members of the papal curia but once he had resolved on a policy, he did not allow for or at least tried to prevent opposition to it from within the curia. In several instances, the pontiff attempted to curtail the influence of the Roman inquisition and of its cardinal-secretary, Santori. For example in the case of the absolution of Henry IV, the pontiff and his advisers successfully counteracted the opposition of Santori and Peña to the pope's new direction in his French policy.

This doctoral thesis focuses on the second half of Clement VIII's reign. On 3 March 1599 Clement created thirteen new cardinals. This altered the equilibrium between the cardinals who had been created by his predecessors and those Clement created in his favour and the pontiff placed 'his' cardinals in the most important Roman congregations.<sup>176</sup> By that time, the 'political and governmental power' was also concentrated in 'the cardinal-nephew, who incarnated the personal power of the pope'.<sup>177</sup> Even if Clement VIII and Cardinal Aldobrandini were the principle policy makers at the papal curia in the time period on which this research focuses, it is important to bear in mind that Cardinal Santori and other members of the papal curia certainly continued to try and exert an influence on the pope or maybe even to oppose decisions with which they disagreed. This is most certainly also true for some of the international political and diplomatic activities of the Aldobrandini pontiff which this thesis analyses in more detail next. Whether Clement's policies towards England, the Dutch 'heretics' and Duke Charles were met with resistance at the College of Cardinals will need to be explored in a further study. If Clement VIII decided to subject these policies to the opinion of the Roman inquisition, such research potentially might also further our understanding of the pope's policies in cases where diplomatic correspondence only provides partial information on the pontiff's intentions.

This thesis concentrates on Clement VIII's involvement in international power politics as the spiritual head of Christendom and on his attitude towards cross-confessional

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<sup>176</sup> Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, p. 329.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 358.

peace. The aim of this thesis is to shed light on the pope as an international diplomatic and political actor rather than on political-institutional mechanisms or on challenges to the pope's authority at the papal curia. It is therefore out of the scope of this study to analyse to which degree Cardinal Santori and other advocates of intransigence towards religious deviants tried to oppose Clement's international policies. Instead, it will explain Clement's aim to operate as the spiritual head of the confessionally divided *respublica christiana*, the role other princes expected him to fulfil, and the degree to which Clement VIII insisted that Catholic sovereigns protect the interests of Catholicism when they negotiated peace with 'heretics'. It will highlight that even if he refused to establish formal diplomatic contacts with 'heretics', Clement still became diplomatically involved in transconfessional peace negotiations behind the scenes.

## ***PART II***

***Spain, England & the Low Countries***

## Introduction

On the eve of Assumption Day 1604, Clement VIII went to the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore by himself. Rumour had it that, after having performed the usual solemnities, the pontiff gave special thanks to God for the peace between Spain and England.<sup>178</sup> At first sight, this piece of news, related in an *avviso di Roma*, is surprising: Clement VIII praised God for the conclusion of peace between a Catholic and a Protestant monarch, Philip III of Spain and James VI/I of England and Scotland. How could the head of the Roman Catholic Church rejoice over the conclusion of a peace across confessional boundaries?

Part II of this doctoral thesis examines Clement VIII's attitude towards two conflicts which had a confessional dimension: Spain's war with England and the revolt of the United Provinces against Habsburg rule in the Low Countries. The chapters in this part discuss Clement VIII's perspective on peace between the Spanish Habsburgs and Elizabeth I (Chapter 3), the Stuart accession in England in 1603 (Chapter 4), on peace between Spain and James VI/I (Chapter 5) as well as on the pacification of the Low Countries (Chapter 6). This introduction provides an overview of the historical context and shows that the pope's diplomatic and political efforts covered in these four chapters need to be regarded as inherently linked.

Over the second half of the sixteenth century, during the long reigns of the Catholic King Philip II and the Protestant Queen Elizabeth I, tensions of an economic and a religious nature arose between the Spanish and English crowns until, in 1585, they escalated into an open war and the Spanish king decided to attempt to subjugate England.<sup>179</sup> A second conflict erupted between Philip II and some of his subjects in the Low Countries over religious, political and economic issues: in 1566, the northern provinces of the Low Countries started to revolt against Spanish rule and in 1581 they formally deposed the Spanish king. Spain's attempts at reconquering and resubmitting the States General of the United Provinces of the Netherlands constituted a heavy financial and military burden on the Spanish crown and the Catholic Church 'steadily lost ground to the government-backed

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<sup>178</sup> BAV, *Urb. Lat.*, 1072 (2), f. 425r: 'Avviso di Roma', 18 Aug 1604.

<sup>179</sup> Paul C. Allen, *Philip III and the Pax Hispanica, 1598–1621: The Failure of Grand Strategy* (New Haven, 2000), p. 1; John Lynch, 'Philip II and the papacy', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series, 11 (1961), pp. 35–39.



Calvinists' in the seven northern provinces of the Netherlands.<sup>180</sup> As if these two wars had not been enough, Philip II became involved in a third conflict after the death of the last Valois king, Henry III (r. 1574–1589): the Spanish king supported the Catholic League against the Calvinist pretender to the French throne, the excommunicated King Henry of Navarre.

Henry's conversion to the Roman Catholic faith in 1593, his coronation in 1594 and his absolution by Pope Clement VIII on 17 December 1595 thwarted Philip II's efforts to install his daughter, the Infanta Isabella Clara Eugenia (1566–1633), on the French throne. These events also firmly established the king of Navarre as King Henry IV of France.<sup>181</sup> already in mid-January 1595, Henry IV's sway in France was strong enough to declare officially war on Spain.<sup>182</sup> In the course of the year 1596, pressure on the Spanish king increased: Henry IV and Elizabeth I entered into a defensive and offensive alliance against Spain in the Treaty of Greenwich, to which they also admitted the Dutch. Philip II's enemies were now united against him in a triple alliance.<sup>183</sup>

Philip II's various martial engagements on land and sea drove Spain to military and financial exhaustion, while Dutch and English freebooting seriously affected the trade with the king's territories overseas. By 1596, Spain was bankrupt and Philip II came to realise that he had overstretched his means. Clement's offer to negotiate peace between Henry IV and the Spanish monarch allowed Philip II to relieve Spain of some of the overbearing pressure on its finances and armies.<sup>184</sup>

In early May 1598, shortly after the conclusion of the Peace of Vervins, the Spanish king also ceded his rule over the Low Countries and the Franche-Comté of Burgundy. Philip II granted these territories as a fief and dowry to his daughter, the Infanta Clara Isabella Eugenia who was to marry the governor of the Habsburg Netherlands, Cardinal-Archduke Albert of Austria. Philip II desired that the cession would contribute to 'the relief of these my kingdoms and the better governance of them and of the Low States themselves' in the hope that the rebelling Dutch provinces would submit themselves to the new rulers of the Low Countries.<sup>185</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Geoffrey Parker, *The Dutch Revolt* (London, 1977), pp. 197, 199, 202 (quotation p. 202); Allen, *Philip III*, pp. 1–2.

<sup>181</sup> Jean-François Labourdette, 'L'importance du Traité de Vervins', in Labourdette, Poussou and Vignal (eds.), *Traité*, p. 25.

<sup>182</sup> Imhof, *Friede*, p. 12.

<sup>183</sup> Geoffrey Parker, *Imprudent King: A New Life of Philip II* (New Haven, 2014), p. 349; Richard B. Wernham, *The Return of the Armadas: The Last Years of the Elizabethan War Against Spain (1595–1603)* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 69–81.

<sup>184</sup> Allen, *Philip III*, p. 2; Geoffrey Parker, *The Grand Strategy of Philip II* (New Haven, 1998), p. 279.

<sup>185</sup> Alicia Esteban Estringana, 'Preparing the ground: the cession of the Netherlands' sovereignty in 1598 and the failure of its peace-making objective (1607–1609)', in Randall Lesaffer (ed.), *The Twelve Years Truce*

After Philip II's death on 13 September 1598, Philip III first tried to reverse his father's policy of pacification. Soon, however, the young king had to realise that the state of his realms required that he listened to those advisers who recommended a pragmatic approach in his conflict with the Dutch and the English enemies: in 1604, the Catholic king of Spain concluded peace with the Protestant king of England and Scotland, and entered into a truce for twelve years with the rebelling, predominantly Calvinistic United Provinces in 1609.<sup>186</sup> Part II of this thesis analyses Clement VIII's attitude towards these transconfessional peace negotiations.

Around 1600, as this part will demonstrate, contemporaries deemed that the Franco-Spanish peace of 1598, the conflict of the Spanish Habsburg with England and the rebellion in the Low Countries were intrinsically linked. In historical scholarship, this interconnection has been recognised: there are monographs, articles and essay collections which offer a global perspective on these conflicts and situate them within a wider context of domestic, dynastic and international power politics.<sup>187</sup> These studies, however, tend to concentrate on the parties which were directly involved in these conflicts: England, the Dutch and the Spanish Habsburgs. Therefore, they offer only a limited view on the pontiff's stance towards the resolution of these conflicts and, more generally, towards cross-confessional peace.<sup>188</sup>

Historians of papal diplomacy, on the other hand, normally concentrate on the role of Clement VIII as a peacemaker between Catholic powers, that is, on the peace negotiations between France and Spain in 1598 and between France and Savoy in 1600–1601. In particular, the pope's opinion on the attempts of the Spanish Habsburgs to settle their

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(1609): *Peace, Truce, War and Law in the Low Countries at the Turn of the 17th Century* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 20–21 (quotation p. 21).

<sup>186</sup> Allen, *Philip III*, pp. 239–242; Bernardo J. García García, 'La Pax Hispanica: una política de conservación', in José Martínez Millán and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (eds.), *La Monarquía de Felipe III*, vol. IV (Los Reinos) (Madrid, 2008), pp. 1218–1219. More generally see: Luis Salas Almela, 'Realeza, valimiento y poder: en torno a las últimas aportaciones sobre el reinado de Felipe III', *Hispania: Revista española de historia*, 70 (2010), pp. 165–179.

<sup>187</sup> Bernardo J. García García, *La Pax Hispanica: política exterior del Duque de Lerma* (Leuven, 1996), pp. 30–74; Allen, *Philip III*, passim; Luc Duerloo, *Dynasty and Piety: Archduke Albert (1598–1621) and Habsburg Political Culture in an Age of Religious Wars* (Farnham, 2012), pp. 103–282; Luc Duerloo, 'Der ehrgeizige Jüngste: Erzherzog Albrecht und die Nachfolge Rudolfs II.', *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 118 (2010), pp. 103–139; García García, 'La Pax Hispanica', pp. 1215–1276; Porfirio Sanz Camañes, 'España ante las paces del Norte a comienzos del siglo XVII: del Tratado de Londres a la Tregua de Amberes', *Cuadernos de historia de España*, 81 (2007), pp. 113–134; Bernardo J. García García, 'Peace with England, from convenience to necessity, 1596–1604', in Anne J. Cruz (ed.), *Material and Symbolic Circulation between Spain and England (1554–1604)* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 135–149. See also the essays in: Bernardo J. García García (ed.), *Tiempo de paces: la Pax Hispánica y la Tregua de los Doce Años (1609–2009)* (Madrid, 2009); Lesaffer (ed.), *Twelve Years*.

<sup>188</sup> John C. Thewlis, *The Peace Policy of Spain (1596–1604)* (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Durham, 1975), pp. 193–194, 198–199, 205, 222; Albert J. Loomie, 'Toleration and diplomacy: the religious issue in Anglo-Spanish relations, 1603–1605', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, New Series*, 80 (1963), pp. 9–10, 13, 20, 22–23, 25–26, 29, 33–34, 39–40, 46; Allen, *Philip III*, pp. 13–14, 32, 74, 104–105.

conflicts with England and the Dutch have escaped the attention of Ludwig von Pastor. The author of *The History of the Popes* mainly concentrated on the English succession and on the contacts between the pope and James VI/I in the two chapters which discussed England and the Low Countries.<sup>189</sup> Overall, there is not any historical study which is dedicated to Clement VIII's attitude towards transconfessional peace negotiations.

Through the prism of princely and diplomatic correspondence as well as of discussions in the Spanish Council of State, this part evaluates the attitude of the head of the Roman Catholic Church towards the attempts of the Spanish Habsburgs to solve their conflicts with the English and Dutch 'heretics'. It situates the pontiff's policies towards England and the pacification of Flanders within the wider context of the relations between Spain and the Holy See. This part shows that the pope did not have a firm stance but rather adapted his attitude according to political and military developments in England and the Low Countries. Clement VIII's policy, conversely, is only one side of the coin; this part will also show what diplomatic and political role Catholic princes expected the pope to fulfil in the resolution of the conflict between the Spanish Habsburgs and their Protestant enemies.

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<sup>189</sup> Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIV, pp. 41–80.

## Clement VIII, the Spanish Habsburgs and Elizabeth I (1598–1600)

In March 1597, Philip II informed his ambassador in Rome, the duke of Sessa, Don Antonio Fernández de Córdoba y Folch de Cardona (1550–1606),<sup>190</sup> of his intentions to make peace with Elizabeth I, the excommunicated queen of England. The Spanish king expressed his disgust at a Catholic prince negotiating with 'heretics'.<sup>191</sup> However, if it was impossible to conclude a Franco-Spanish peace without the inclusion of Henry IV's ally, Elizabeth I, then he would consider making peace with her too. If Clement VIII admitted England to the peace talks, then, in the king's opinion, 'His Holiness ought to take it upon himself to bring about as a first condition that the exercise of Catholicism be freely extended to the Catholics throughout the realm'.<sup>192</sup> This chapter will discuss Clement VIII's attitude towards peace negotiations between the Spanish Habsburgs and the Protestant, excommunicated queen of England after the conclusion of the Peace of Vervins.

The English and the Dutch had tried to dissuade Henry IV from leaving the triple alliance but, in March 1598, Henry IV justified his determination to conclude peace with Spain to his allies, saying that his subjects would rebel soon if he did not make peace and that he could not continue the war since his confederates would not lend him substantial support.<sup>193</sup> The conclusion of the Peace of Vervins on 2 May 1598 thus did not come as a surprise but was still a shock to the Dutch English: they had lost an ally and their Spanish enemy had now more military and financial means to wage war against them.

Elizabeth I herself favoured peace with Spain but also did not wish to desert her

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<sup>190</sup> For Sessa, see: Silvano Giordano (ed.), *Istruzioni di Filippo III ai suoi ambasciatori a Roma (1598–1621)* (Rome, 2006), pp. LIX–LXI.

<sup>191</sup> Allen, *Philip III*, p. 13.

<sup>192</sup> Translated and quoted in: *ibid.*, pp. 13–14.

<sup>193</sup> Pauline Croft, 'Rex Pacificus, Robert Cecil, and the 1604 Peace with Spain', in Glenn Burgess, Rowland Wymer and Jason Lawrence (eds.), *The Accession of James I: Historical and Cultural Consequences* (Basingstoke, 2006), p. 141; Wernham, *Armadas*, pp. 220–221, 210–232. See also: Jean–Pierre Poussou, 'La politique extérieure d'Elisabeth I<sup>ère</sup> et la paix de Vervins', in Labourdette, Poussou and Vignal (eds.), *Traité*, pp. 247–263.

Dutch allies.<sup>194</sup> In the autumn of 1598, the States General refused to acknowledge Archduchess Isabella as the new sovereign of the Low Countries and thus confirmed their readiness to continue the war against the Spanish 'oppressors'. Elizabeth I, on the other hand, decided in January 1599 that it was in her best interest to embrace the first, tentative peace proposals of the Spanish Habsburgs. The ensuing preliminary negotiations ultimately led to the abortive peace talks between representatives of Spain, the archdukes and the English queen in Boulogne-sur-Mer in summer 1600.<sup>195</sup>

This chapter first discusses Henry IV's intentions to admit his Protestant allies to the Franco-Spanish peace negotiations and Clement VIII's response to the king's intentions. It also explores rumours that Clement intended to negotiate peace between the Spanish Habsburgs and Queen Elizabeth I after the conclusion of the Peace of Vervins. The second subchapter addresses the pope's viewpoint on the preliminary negotiations between the Spanish Habsburgs and England in 1599–1600. It argues that the pope's policy was not received equally well at the courts in Spain and in Brussels. This chapter demonstrates that the stance of the Aldobrandini pope towards peace between the Spanish Habsburgs and Elizabeth I was less firm than his refusal to reconcile these enemies in Vervins suggested.

### **3.1. The pope as a peacemaker between Spain and England? (1597–1598)**

As mentioned in the General Introduction, Clement VIII refused to accept the participation of any Protestant power in the papal negotiations which led to the Franco-Spanish peace of 1598.<sup>196</sup> The question whether 'heretical' powers should be admitted to the papal peace negotiations arose because Henry IV insisted that he had to keep his word as a prince: he argued that he could not forsake Elizabeth I with whom he had entered into a defensive and offensive alliance in the Treaty of Greenwich (1596) and against whom the pope now wished him to turn his armies in a joint Franco-Spanish military enterprise. In Rome, Clement VIII discussed this problem with Arnauld d'Ossat (1537–1604) who had negotiated Henry IV's absolution at the Holy See and who continued to defend the French interests at the papal curia until Henry IV's ambassador, Duke François of Luxembourg and Piney (c. 1546–1613), arrived in Rome in the spring of 1597.<sup>197</sup>

In January 1597, Clement VIII told D'Ossat that Henry IV did not need to observe the agreements in the Treaty of Greenwich since 'the oath had been given to a heretic, and His

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<sup>194</sup> Allen, *Philip III*, pp. 15–16; Wernham, *Armadas*, p. 239.

<sup>195</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty*, pp. 105, 116.

<sup>196</sup> Haan, 'La dernière paix', pp. 51–52, 63.

<sup>197</sup> Imhof, *Friede*, pp. 88–89.

Majesty first had made another pledge to God and to him, the pope'.<sup>198</sup> Clearly, from Clement's perspective, a *fides* given to a 'heretical' ruler, especially an excommunicated one, was invalid and a Catholic prince thus was not bound to keep an agreement with that ruler. The pope, however, also tried to convince the French king to forsake his ally by a Machiavellian rather than a religious argument. Clement VIII underlined that 'kings and other sovereign princes permit themselves to do everything which was to their advantage' and that the third duke of Urbino, Francesco Maria della Rovere (r. 1508–1516, 1521–1538), 'used to say that if a simple gentleman or a non-sovereign *seigneur* did not keep his word, he would be dishonoured and blamed by everyone but sovereign princes, for reason of state, could without any greater blame conclude treaties and rescind them, enter into alliances and leave them again, lie, betray and all other such things'.<sup>199</sup>

Still, the French king insisted that he would only agree to a peace which included his Protestant allies. In early May 1597, Cardinal Aldobrandini therefore told the new French ambassador in Rome that he 'did not think' that it would be 'proper for the dignity of the pope' if Clement VIII became involved in 'a peace treaty which included the queen of England or the States of the Low Countries'.<sup>200</sup> At the end of the same month, Aldobrandini also addressed the topic in a ciphered letter which had been drafted by the pope himself. The pope wanted the Cardinal–Legate Alessandro de' Medici, who was tasked with negotiating the Franco-Spanish peace, to inform Henry IV that 'if he wanted to include England and the Low Countries' in the peace, Clement 'could not and never would be the instrument' by which this were to be done. For the pope, 'the aim of this *negotio* had to be the peace of [the French] kingdom and the wellbeing of the religion' and 'the inclusion' of the English and the Dutch in the peace treaty conflicted with this aim.<sup>201</sup>

Although not mentioned by Clement VIII and Cardinal Aldobrandini, Elizabeth I had been excommunicated by Pius V and thus deprived of her crown. The pope therefore could not permit diplomatic contact between Rome and a 'heretic' who had been formally deposed as ruler. This had also been the stance of the papacy when, after his conversion in 1593, Henry intended to establish diplomatic contact with Rome and sent the duke of Nevers, Louis Gonzaga (1539–1595), as ambassador there. Sixtus V had excommunicated Henry Bourbon and consequently, Henry had no right to send any ambassador as a king.

<sup>198</sup> Houssaie (ed.), *Letres*, vol. II (Amsterdam, 1708), p. 358. See also: Imhof, *Friede*, p. 89.

<sup>199</sup> Houssaie (ed.), *Letres*, vol. II, pp. 358–359; Imhof, *Friede*, pp. 89–90.

<sup>200</sup> AMAE, *Correspondance Politique*, Rome, 14, p. 87: the duke of Luxembourg–Piney to Henry IV, 9 May 1597. See also: Imhof, *Friede*, p. 92.

<sup>201</sup> ASV, *Segreteria di Stato, Francia*, 44, f. 124r: Aldobrandini to de' Medici, 31 May 1597 (letter drafted by the pope).

Eventually, Clement only consented to receive Nevers as a private person.<sup>202</sup> Clement VIII therefore would not have permitted Cardinal de' Medici to negotiate with the representatives of the excommunicate Elizabeth I, even less so than with the representatives of the Dutch 'heretics' whom the pontiff anyway regarded as subjects of the Spanish king rather than as a sovereign power.

In late July 1597 the cardinal–legate wrote to Rome that he had told Henry IV that he 'would neither consent to, approve of or be a participant in' any negotiations with 'heretics'. The legate, however, deemed that he should not 'go any further, that is, to exclude absolutely any separate treaties'. Instead, the legate wished the pope to instruct him 'explicitly' on what he had to do.<sup>203</sup> To this Aldobrandini replied in a letter which had again been drafted by Clement VIII: 'the pope ordered him to procure peace' between the Spanish and the French. If they, however, also negotiated with the Dutch and the English, the cardinal–legate had to 'watch' these negotiations and to ensure 'with all industry' that they would lead to 'the best possible advantage' for the Catholic religion, such as 'the permission of the free practice of the Catholic religion where it did not exist' and 'the restitution of the churches, if not all of them [at least of] some'.<sup>204</sup>

Thus, in the end, 'the Holy See perceptibly bent its position without ... ceding on the essential'.<sup>205</sup> The Holy See did not admit any 'heretical' power to the papal peace negotiations but the cardinal–legate also did not have to object to negotiations across the confessional borders on the margins of the Franco-Spanish peace talks which he had to direct in the pope's name. Instead, Cardinal de' Medici would have to influence the Catholic parties to introduce advantages for the Catholic religion in such potential transconfessional peace agreements. This thesis details the degree to which Clement VIII always insisted on immediate advantages for the Catholic cause in peace negotiations between Catholic and Protestant powers. Despite talk of a possible inclusion of Henry IV's Protestant allies in separate peace negotiations and treaties, the Spanish Habsburgs eventually signed peace with Henry IV only. Consequently, they remained at war with Elizabeth I and the States General of the United Provinces.

The news of the Franco-Spanish peace reached Clement VIII a couple of days after his arrival in Ferrara, on the night of 13 May 1598 and just when he was about to go to bed.

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<sup>202</sup> Fattori, *Clemente VIII*, pp. 37–47; JAITNER, vol. I, pp. XIV–XV, CCXXXVI–CCXXXVII; Martin, 'La reprise des relations diplomatiques', pp. 344–347.

<sup>203</sup> ASV, *Segreteria di Stato, Francia*, 45, f. 62v: De' Medici to Aldobrandini, 27 July 1597. See also: Haan, 'La dernière paix', p. 52.

<sup>204</sup> ASV, *Segreteria di Stato, Francia*, 44, f. 133v: Aldobrandini to de' Medici, 7 Sept 1597 (letter drafted by the pope); Imhof, *Friede*, p. 91; Haan, 'La dernière paix', p. 52 (footnote 165); Louant, 'L'intervention', p. 147.

<sup>205</sup> Haan, 'La dernière paix', p. 52 (footnote 165).

Full of joy, the pope therefore dressed himself again and celebrated a *Te Deum Laudamus* in his private chapel.<sup>206</sup> Not too long after the pope announced that he would now dedicate himself to organising an anti-Ottoman league, comprising France, Spain, Venice, Emperor Rudolf II and Rome. Moreover, he hoped that other Italian princes and the Polish king would join it too.<sup>207</sup> In June, a member of French ambassador's household at the papal court emphasised that ever since Clement VIII had been informed of the conclusion of the Franco-Spanish peace, 'one could detect an extreme desire in the pope's mind to form a league between all Christian princes in order to unite all Christian forces in a common war against the Turks'.<sup>208</sup> This 'extreme desire', coupled with reports that Elizabeth I might convert to the Catholic faith, sparked rumours that Clement was also willing to make peace between Spain and England.

On 6 June 1598, the *avvisi* in Rome related that there was a rumour in Ferrara that Clement VIII would send one of his nephews, Cardinal Aldobrandini, as a legate to Spain and France. The cardinal-nephew would congratulate Henry IV and Philip II for the conclusion of the Peace of Vervins and negotiate a powerful league against the Ottoman Empire. Moreover, these *avvisi* reported that the cardinal-nephew would then travel to England 'because they had news from the king of France that he was trying to convince [Elizabeth I] to convert to the Catholic faith'. Some people, on the other hand, believed that Cardinal Ottavio Bandini (1558–1629) was to be charged with this task. The anonymous author of the *avvisi* emphasised that this piece of news was probably only based on a couple of conversations held at the papal court.<sup>209</sup> The rumours, however, persisted and became more elaborate by mid-June.

On 13 June, the *avvisi* in Ferrara related that in the opinion of the Spanish, it would be difficult for Philip II to comply with Clement VIII's wish for the Spanish to participate in the league against the Ottomans. The Spanish felt that their king could not fulfil the pope's wish while the Anglo-Spanish war continued. Philip II, the Spanish argued according to the *avvisi*, could not simply withdraw military forces from his kingdoms, exposing Portugal, Spain and the Indies to the queen's armada and to English privateers. In Ferrara, however, the rumour was that the pope would undoubtedly send Cardinal Aldobrandini to Spain and France in order to make the two crowns join an anti-Ottoman league. Subsequently, these reports asserted, Aldobrandini would sail to England and

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<sup>206</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 970, no f.: Sessa to Philip II, 27 May 1598.

<sup>207</sup> Niederkorn, *Mächte*, p. 90.

<sup>208</sup> AMAE, *Correspondance Politique, Rome*, 15, p. 346: Denis–Simon de Marquemont to Henry IV, 11 June 1598.

<sup>209</sup> BAV, *Urb. Lat.*, 1066, ff. 510r, 511r: 'Avviso di Roma', 6 June 1598. For Bandini, see: Alberto Merola, 'Bandini, Ottavio', *DBI*, 5 (1963), pp. 718–719.



negotiate peace between Elizabeth I and Philip II. The author of this *avviso* explained that Clement VIII intended to send his nephew on this mission because the king of France had told the pope that Elizabeth I had signalled some interest in it.<sup>210</sup> One month later, the *avvisi di Ferrara* returned to this topic again, relating that it was still rumoured that Cardinal Aldobrandini would travel to France, Spain and possibly also to England in September. Ultimately, the journey of the cardinal–nephew was meant to benefit the war against the Ottomans in the coming year.<sup>211</sup>

Naturally, the *avvisi* generally need to be read with caution. In the case of the *avvisi* preserved in the *Urbinati Latini* we know that, from the early 1570s onwards, they had been collected for the ducal court in Urbino.<sup>212</sup> All collections of manuscript 'newsletters', which were often referred to in letters of diplomats and attached to diplomatic correspondence, have in common that they only tended to provide information on the date and place from where they had been received.<sup>213</sup> Moreover, as Brendan Dooley emphasised, early modern 'newsletter writers depended for their information upon rumor and hearsay' much more often 'than upon accredited sources' and they 'added their own blend of rumor, invention, commentary, and invective'. Therefore it is difficult to verify the content of such manuscript newsletters 'by reference to other sources' which 'is hardly surprising, because much of it may be false – although there is seldom any way of finding out which portion'.<sup>214</sup> In the words of Filippo De Vivo: 'Then as today, the boundary between news and spin was easily blurred by the partisan professionals of news'.<sup>215</sup> Yet, as De Vivo also stressed, even lies and calumnies had to be presented in a manner which rendered them credible and therefore they inform historians how an invention had to be formulated in order to make it sound true to contemporaries.<sup>216</sup>

What does this mean for the content of the *avvisi* related in the previous paragraphs? The rumours which allegedly circulated at the papal court in Ferrara could have been

<sup>210</sup> BAV, *Urb. Lat.*, 1066, ff. 521v–522r: 'Avviso di Ferrara', 13 June 1598.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 571v: 'Avviso di Ferrara', 18 July 1598.

<sup>212</sup> Sabrina M. Seidler, *Il teatro del mondo: Diplomatiche und journalistische Relationen vom römischen Hof aus dem 17. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 1996), p. 41. For the *avvisi di Roma* see also: Mario Infelise, 'Gli avvisi di Roma: informazione e politica nel secolo XVII', in Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (eds.), *La corte di Roma tra Cinque e Seicento: 'teatro' della politica europea* (Rome, 1998), pp. 189–205. More generally, see: Mario Infelise, *Prima dei giornali: alle origini della pubblica informazione (secoli XVI e XVII)* (Rome, 2002); Brendan Dooley, *The Social History of Skepticism: Experience and Doubt in Early Modern Culture* (Baltimore, 1999). See also: Filippo De Vivo, *Information and Communication in Venice: Rethinking Early Modern Politics* (Oxford, 2007); republished in a more extensive version as: Filippo De Vivo, *Patrizi, informatori, barbieri: politica e informazione a Venezia nella prima età moderna* (Milan, 2012).

<sup>213</sup> Infelise, *Prima dei giornali*, pp. 108–109.

<sup>214</sup> Dooley, *Skepticism*, pp. 4, 15.

<sup>215</sup> De Vivo, *Information*, p. 84.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11. See also: De Vivo, *Patrizi*, p. 28.

entirely invented by the individual who had originally reported them, most likely in exchange for money. In this case, the *avvisi* did not report actual rumours which were discussed at the papal court; rather they were mere inventions which an individual deemed as credible enough to be sold as a rumour to others. It is however more likely that the *avvisi* reported rumours about the intentions of the pope which truly did circulate at the papal court but which were potentially also 'enriched' with additional, false details by one of the anonymous *menante* (as which the *avvisi*-writers were known in Rome). Moreover, it is possible that actual considerations of the pope had been leaked to members of the papal curia who then speculated further about the pope's potential plans. In that case, the rumours were partially based on actual considerations of the pope but blended with the opinion of others about the diplomatic action which Clement might take next. Therefore, it is possible that Clement VIII actually considered sending a legate to Spain and France in order to congratulate the two kings for the conclusion of peace and to unite them in the war against the Ottomans. The rumour that the pontiff also planned to send his representative to England in order to make peace between Philip II and Elizabeth I, conversely, could have been mere conjecture.

Furthermore, the rumours potentially only consisted of speculations of members of the papal curia about Clement VIII's intentions and that these conjectures were not founded on any actual plans of the pope which had been leaked. In that case, the pope's alleged plans to make peace between Spain and England as well as his alleged intentions to send a legate to Spain and France were all mere speculation. As one of the news-writers indicated, his *avviso* was probably only based on a few conversations held at the papal court; in other words, it consisted most likely of mere conjectures by some curialists rather than of any actual considerations of the pope about which diplomatic step towards the formation of an anti-Ottoman league he should take next. Thus, it is impossible to establish the degree to which rumours reported in the *avvisi* contained any actual facts.<sup>217</sup> These rumours, however, show what sort of political and diplomatic transactions the pope's contemporaries thought the Aldobrandini pontiff would possibly consider undertaking, shedding light on Clement VIII's image as a diplomatic actor either among some members of the papal court or among the *menante*.

Firstly, it seems that Henry IV's absolution, the papal peace negotiations in Vervins and Clement VIII's diplomatic, military and financial support for the emperor's anti-Ottoman war had promoted the image of the pope as *padre comune* and peacemaker to such a degree that now there were individuals who imagined that the Aldobrandini pontiff would

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<sup>217</sup> Dooley, *Skepticism*, pp. 15, 17.

even make peace between a Catholic king and an excommunicated 'heretical' ruler. According to the *avvisi*, there were some people who thought that Clement VIII believed that Elizabeth I would convert just like Henry IV had done – albeit under completely different political and religious premises in the predominantly Catholic kingdom of France – and would send a cardinal to make peace between Philip II and a newly converted queen of England. However, only the first *avviso* explicitly referred to Henry IV's alleged intention to convince Elizabeth I to convert. The other *avvisi* thus suggest that some people imagined that, for the goal of achieving a league against the Ottomans, Clement VIII would not only approve of peace between a Catholic and a Protestant power – Spain and England – but even envisage to obtain it by sending a cardinal on a peace legation to England. Yet, as mentioned, Clement certainly would not have considered establishing official diplomatic contact with Elizabeth I while she remained formally deposed as a ruler by virtue of the papal excommunication.

Secondly, Cardinal Aldobrandini's handling of the negotiations which terminated in the peaceful integration of Ferrara into the Papal States had promoted his image as an able diplomat.<sup>218</sup> As a matter of fact, this image had apparently increased to such a degree that there were people at the papal court who believed that Clement VIII would now entrust him with two tasks which were even more difficult: to convince Spain and France to head a league of Catholic princes against the Ottomans and to make peace between Philip II and Elizabeth I.

As Michael Rohrschneider reasserted recently, reputation was a key factor which profoundly influenced early modern princes and noblemen in their decision-making processes and actions.<sup>219</sup> It is therefore highly unlikely that Clement VIII would have seriously considered tasking his nephew with a legation doomed to fail and which entailed that a cardinal of the Roman Catholic Church made peace between a Catholic prince and an excommunicated 'heretic'. Such a mission would have jeopardised the reputation which the pope and his nephew had gained for themselves, their family and the papacy by the successful conclusion of the Peace of Vervins and the reintegration of Ferrara into the Papal States.

Unsurprisingly, Clement VIII neither charged his *nipote* nor any other cardinal with a peacemaking mission to England. In the time period when the *avvisi* recounted all these rumours, the Spanish and the French ambassadors in Rome did not relate that the pope discussed the idea of sending a legate to France and Spain for the formation of an anti-

<sup>218</sup> Mörschel, 'Vergänglichkeit', p. 92; JAITNER, vol. I, pp. CXIX–CXX; Jaitner, 'De officio', p. 383.

<sup>219</sup> Michael Rohrschneider, 'Reputation als Leitfaktor in den internationalen Beziehungen der Frühen Neuzeit', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 291 (2010), p. 351.

Ottoman league. Nor did they write that they had heard of any such project.<sup>220</sup> Thus, even the reports that Cardinal Aldobrandini would travel to Spain and France seem to have been nothing more than rumours or private opinions.

The pope had firmly refused Protestant participation in the peace talks at Vervins. Yet, as the *avvisi* in summer 1598 show, there were individuals at the papal court who either believed that it was, or who believed that Clement VIII thought it was, the task of the *padre comune* to make peace between Protestant and Catholic powers. The ultimate aim of such a project would have been to free Philip II of another war so that Spain could join a league against the Ottomans. As we have seen in the General Introduction, Peter Bartl argued that Clement VIII regarded the Ottomans as worse than the Protestants.<sup>221</sup> The rumours related in the *avvisi* indicate that, in the wake of the Franco-Spanish peace, some of the pope's contemporaries seemingly believed that Clement would prioritise the formation of an anti-Ottoman league above everything else. As the next subchapter shows, those who believed that Clement VIII might make peace between the Spanish Habsburgs and Elizabeth I were only right in as much as the pope did not necessarily object to peace talks between them, but without papal participation.

### **3.2. Clement VIII's perspective on peace between the Spanish Habsburgs and Elizabeth I (1599–1600)**

From early 1599 to summer 1600, the Spanish Habsburgs and Elizabeth I intensively discussed whether they could settle their differences, first in preliminary negotiations and then during the fruitless peace conference of Boulogne-sur-Mer (May–August 1600).<sup>222</sup> These negotiations have mainly received scholarly attention from the perspectives of the rulers whose representatives directly participated in them: Elizabeth I, Philip III and the Archdukes Albert and Isabella.<sup>223</sup> Based on the correspondence between the nuncio in Brussels, Ottavio Mirto Frangipani (1542/1543–1612), and Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, this subchapter analyses Clement VIII's approach to these cross-confessional negotiations

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<sup>220</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 970, no f.: Sessa to Philip II, mid-May to the end of July 1598; AMAE, *Correspondance Politique*, Rome, 15, pp. 295–431: the duke of Luxembourg–Piney and Denis–Simon de Marquemont to Henry IV, mid-May to the end of July 1598; Houssaie (ed.), *Letres*, vol. III, pp. 91–115.

<sup>221</sup> Bartl, 'Türkenkrieg', p. 67.

<sup>222</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty*, pp. 104–123; Ernest–Théodore Hamy, 'Conférence pour la paix entre l'Angleterre et l'Espagne, tenue à Boulogne en 1600: étude historique suivie d'un choix de lettres relatives à cet événement', *Bulletin de la Société académique de l'arrondissement de Boulogne-sur-Mer*, 7 (1904–1907), pp. 434–460; Pierre–Paul Laffleur de Kermaingant, *L'Ambassade de France en Angleterre sous Henri IV: mission de Jean de Thumery, Sieur de Boissise (1598–1602)*, vol. I (Paris, 1886), pp. 422–439.

<sup>223</sup> García García, 'La Pax Hispanica', pp. 1248–1255; Allen, *Philip III*, pp. 30–48; Thewlis, *Peace*, pp. 178–185. For a mainly English point of view, see: Wernham, *Armadas*, pp. 319–334. For primary sources which offer an English perspective on these negotiations, see: Edmund Sawyer (ed.), *Memorials of Affairs of State in the Reigns of Q. Elizabeth and K. James I. Collected (Chiefly) from the Original Papers of the Right Honourable Sir Ralph Winwood*, vol. I (London, 1725), pp. 186–226.

and examines the degree to which he became involved in them.<sup>224</sup>

As we have seen in the General Introduction, Eckehart Stöve argued that Rome officially insisted that there was no difference between the interests of religion and of the state. In its *Realpolitik*, on the other hand, the papacy silently agreed that rulers should follow their immediate political interests if religious and temporal interests conflicted: the pope hoped that political stability would ultimately also favour the interests of Catholicism.<sup>225</sup> This *Realpolitik* was a policy of leniency towards Protestants *within* the commonwealth of a Catholic ruler. In the negotiations between the Spanish Habsburgs and England, on the other hand, the Habsburgs had to balance the interest of religion in another commonwealth – Protestant England – with the temporal interest of their own states, which needed peace. The question therefore is: did the pope also follow a pragmatic policy in such a case, or did he insist on matters of principle in dealings of Catholic rulers with 'heretical' princes? And how did Catholic rulers react to the pope's policy?

In September 1598, Archduke Albert left the Low Countries in order to meet his bride, the Infanta Isabella, in Spain. During his absence, lasting nearly a year, Albert named his cousin Cardinal–Archduke Andreas of Austria (1558–1600) as acting governor of Flanders.<sup>226</sup> In December 1598, Frangipani informed Cardinal Aldobrandini that Cardinal–Archduke Andreas intended to propose peace to Elizabeth I, supposing that she wished to end the war too.<sup>227</sup> In reply, the nuncio was instructed to tell Cardinal–Archduke Andreas that, of course, all Catholic princes must work for God's glory but, as a prince of the Church, Andreas was especially obliged to care for the Catholic faith. The potential peace talks with England, according to Pietro Aldobrandini, gave the cardinal an excellent occasion to show his zeal for the Catholic cause and the whole of Christendom as well as to acquire glory in the eyes of God and the world.

Frangipani had to point out to Andreas that the positive outcome of all affairs ultimately lay in God's hands. Consequently, the end of all affairs had to be directed towards God's service and glory. The pope wished the nuncio to emphasise that God's glory was inseparable from religion and therefore 'the end goal in this peace negotiation had to be religion itself, and all [affairs] which could and had to be expected for the tranquillity of the temporal state had to be considered next only'.<sup>228</sup> Clement asked Aldobrandini to reiterate

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<sup>224</sup> *Frangipani*, 3 vols. (Brussels, 1924–1942). For a short discussion of the exchange of letters between Frangipani and Aldobrandini relating to the negotiations between the Spanish Habsburgs and England, see: *ibid.*, vol. III.i, pp. LXXVII–LXXIX and LXXXVI (erroneously LXXXXVI)–XC.

<sup>225</sup> Stöve, 'Häresiebekämpfung', p. 59.

<sup>226</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty*, p. 54.

<sup>227</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. II (Brussels, 1932), p. 411.

<sup>228</sup> ASV, *FB*, *serie III*, 40, f. 40r: Aldobrandini to Frangipani, 2 Jan 1599. French summary: *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii (Brussels, 1942), pp. 617–618.

this point in late March 1599: in the negotiations with England, Cardinal–Archduke Andreas had to do everything which lay in his power 'for the Catholic religion and the liberty of the few ... Catholics which had remained in this kingdom'.<sup>229</sup>

The pope asked Andreas to prioritise the interests of religion in England over the immediate political interests and exigencies of the Spanish Habsburgs. Ostensibly it looks as if the pope insisted on matters of principle in the case of the dealings of the Habsburgs with Elizabeth I. In reality, however, the pontiff deviated from matters of principle: instead of exhorting the cardinal–archduke to persist in the war against the excommunicated queen, Clement VIII acquiesced in Andreas's decision to explore the possibility of peace with her. The pope did not intend to oppose any transconfessional peace agreement for as long as it also contained articles which helped the Catholic cause in England.

As seen earlier in this chapter, Philip II stated in March 1597 that the pope had to care first and foremost for the good of the Catholic religion in England if he admitted envoys of Elizabeth I to the Franco-Spanish peace negotiations. In 1599, the pope's attitude corresponded with the expectations of the former Spanish king, Philip II: Clement VIII insisted on the priority of the Catholic cause over everything else. In 1599–1600, however, the onus on procuring securities for the English Catholics in peace negotiations was not on the pope but on the Spanish Habsburgs themselves. The pope's relentless exhortations to the governors in Brussels not to neglect religion in their dealings with England were, as we will see, regarded as an intrusion by Archduke Albert. The court in Spain, on the other hand, welcomed and encouraged papal interference in Brussels, even though the Spanish king himself did not deem it necessary to ask Clement VIII whether he could and should make peace with an excommunicated 'heretical' ruler.

In June 1599, the Spanish Council of State met in the presence of King Philip III and discussed issues relating to peace negotiations with Elizabeth I.<sup>230</sup> The councillors decided that the king's confessor, Father Gaspar de Córdoba (d. 1604),<sup>231</sup> should decide whether it was licit for the Catholic king to negotiate a truce or to make peace with the excommunicated queen. The royal confessor listened to the council's deliberations and pronounced his judgment at the end of the meeting that it would be licit for Philip III to make peace with Elizabeth I because it allowed the king to negotiate some relief for the oppressed English Catholics.<sup>232</sup> Moreover, peace with England would allow Philip III to

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<sup>229</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 40, f. 43r: Aldobrandini to Frangipani, 27 March 1599. French summary in: *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, p. 622.

<sup>230</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1855, no f.: consulta, 20 June 1599; Allen, *Philip III*, pp. 4–10.

<sup>231</sup> Allen, *Philip III*, p. 8. For Córdoba, see: Leandro Martínez Peñas, *El confesor del rey en el antiguo régimen* (Madrid, 2007), pp. 366–382.

<sup>232</sup> Thewlis, *Peace*, pp. 179–180.

restore his military forces to new strength 'so as subsequently to be able to dedicate himself more fully to the defence of the Catholic cause'.<sup>233</sup> Upon this, the king remarked that the confessor's words removed the scruples which he would have had in negotiating peace with Elizabeth I. Philip III also thought that it would be best to let Clement VIII know that he had ordered that the question of peace with England be discussed in his confessor's presence and that the pope be informed of Fray Gaspar's judgment.<sup>234</sup>

Thus, although Philip III did not feel that he needed to ask for the pope's approval for negotiating a truce or peace with an excommunicated 'heretic', the king still was keen to show to Clement that he did not take such a grave decision without at least listening to his confessor. The king's confessor, in turn, did not base his judgment on matters of principle or on theological arguments: Fray Gaspar paid attention to the council's deliberations and came to a pragmatic verdict which, in essence, postulated that peace with Elizabeth I was a means to an end rather than an end in itself: making peace allowed the king to defend the interest of religion by securing improvements for English Catholics until Spain had recovered enough to renew war. Thus, as long as the interest of religion remained his main goal, the king could take a decision which, at first sight, mainly seemed to serve the interest of his own dominions. Moreover, Fray Gaspar clearly deemed that Philip III would not be obliged to keep his *fides* given to an excommunicated ruler or that Spain might find grounds for justifying a renewal of war when convenient.

The Spanish councillors thought that freedom of religious practice for English Catholic was crucial. For a specific example of how this liberty could be granted in practice, the king's advisers had recourse to the example of France where, in the Edict of Nantes (1598), Henry IV had allowed his Catholic and Protestant subjects to practise their religion freely. The Spanish Council of State was quick to add that, in France, this equated to moral bankruptcy and that it was a break of Henry IV's promises to the pope upon his absolution. In the case of England, conversely, free exercise of religion would represent a moral gain since it would benefit Catholicism.

The king's advisers recommended that, at the beginning of peace talks, his representatives should insist on a maximum of demands such as reparations for war damages, the restitution of places which the English occupied in the Low Countries, England's abandonment of its Dutch allies and, finally, religious liberty for the queen's Catholic subjects. Subsequently, as a demonstration of Spain's readiness to compromise, the representatives could drop these demands, except for the requests in favour of the

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<sup>233</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1855, no f.: consulta, 20 June 1599. Translated and quoted in: Thewlis, *Peace*, p. 180.

<sup>234</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1855, no f.: consulta, 20 June 1599.

Catholic religion.<sup>235</sup>

Evidently, the Spanish council was convinced that Spain should not negotiate peace with Elizabeth I without obtaining an improvement of the religious situation in her kingdom and was even willing to sacrifice military, political and financial interests for this goal. The council also advised the king that his ambassador in Rome should inform Clement VIII of these deliberations and Philip III agreed with his advisers.<sup>236</sup> Clearly, the Spanish court was deeply concerned that peace with a 'heretic' would tarnish Spain's reputation as a Catholic power, in particular in the eyes of the pope. The Spanish, however, were also concerned that, for the sake of peace, Philip III's relatives in Brussels would ultimately relinquish the Catholic cause in England.

### ***Tensions between Archduke Albert and the Holy See over the peace negotiations***

So far, we have seen that some individuals at the papal court expected that the pope would make peace between the Spanish Habsburgs and Elizabeth I after the Peace of Vervins in order to free Spanish forces for the anti-Ottoman war. Moreover, we have seen that Clement VIII did not disapprove of such peace talks if they also helped Catholics in England. This attitude corresponded with the intentions of the Spanish king. But what were the plans of the archdukes, and how did this affect their relations with Rome?

As governor and, subsequently, as ruler of the Spanish Netherlands, Archduke Albert always made clear that he regarded war only as a means to an end. Although he often personally participated in the military campaigns of the army of Flanders, he did not take pleasure in warfare. Albert did not intend to end the conflicts with France, England and the Dutch Provinces by an ultimate military victory and always indicated to his enemies that he was willing to make peace. As Luc Duerloo emphasised, Albert waged war in order to be able to negotiate peace from a strong bargaining position.<sup>237</sup> In 1600, the Spanish king therefore was not sure whether, due to their desire for peace, the archdukes and their representatives would persevere as steadfast in insisting on an improvement of the Catholics cause in England as Philip III wished.

In January 1600, Baltasar de Zúñiga (1561–1622), Spain's ambassador in Brussels, warned that it was necessary to send a Spanish 'counter-weight to the Flemish representatives' for the peace negotiations with England. Zúñiga dreaded that the plenipotentiaries of the archdukes 'would inevitably share their compatriots' wish for peace at virtually any price, and especially at the cost of the religious concessions that Spain

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<sup>235</sup> Ibid. See also: Thewlis, *Peace*, p. 180.

<sup>236</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1855, no f.: consulta, 20 June 1599.

<sup>237</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty*, p. 47.



hoped to exact from the English'.<sup>238</sup> In response, the Spanish king sent a second representative to Flanders to support Zúñiga. In the instruction for his envoy, Philip III still stressed the priority of religious matters in the negotiations but he also opened up room for manoeuvre: if the English refused to discuss granting freedom of religious practice for the Catholics, the peace talks should not be aborted. Instead, the Spanish representatives had to ask Spain for more directions.<sup>239</sup> In particular, the king ordered that the Spanish representatives keep the papal nuncio in Brussels informed about the peace negotiations so that Frangipani could also insist on the interest of religion among the archdukes and thus help the Spanish in their efforts.<sup>240</sup> Like the Spanish court, Rome also observed the course of the preliminary peace negotiations in 1599–1600 with concern.

On 13 March 1599 Frangipani reported to Rome that the Council of State in Flanders intended to conclude peace with England by all means and to leave the interest of religion aside if it became an obstacle to peace. The nuncio therefore decided to follow Cardinal–Archduke Andreas to the military camp close to Maestricht and to dissuade the cardinal–archduke from agreeing with the council. If Andreas consented to such a policy now, Frangipani anticipated, it would become impossible for Archduke Albert to revert his cousin's decisions and to prioritise again the interest of Catholicism in the peace negotiations once he was back in Flanders.<sup>241</sup> In April the pope's nephew replied that Clement did not simply approve but even praised Frangipani's intention to follow Andreas to the military camp in order to ensure that 'in its execution, the resolution reached in the council concerning peace with England will always correspond with the regard for the religion and for the Catholics in this kingdom'.<sup>242</sup> From the tone of Aldobrandini's reply, it seems that the pope and his nephew were not yet alarmed by the developments in Flanders but were watching them with apprehension. This concern, however, increased with time and Cardinal Aldobrandini started to become impatient.

In September 1599, upon his return to Brussels, Archduke Albert decided to continue his cousin's policy of rapprochement and sent an envoy to Elizabeth I to sound out whether she would be willing to make peace with Spain and the Southern Netherlands.<sup>243</sup> In early November 1599, Frangipani informed the cardinal–nephew that he had spoken to Albert because he feared that the conflicting parties did not intend to discuss religious affairs

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<sup>238</sup> Thewlis, *Peace*, p. 180.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

<sup>240</sup> Biblioteca Nacional de España, mss. 6170, ff. 140v–141r: Instruction for Hernando Carillo, 29 Feb 1600.

<sup>241</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.i, p. 27.

<sup>242</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 40, f. 43v: Aldobrandini to Frangipani, 3 April 1599.

<sup>243</sup> Wernham, *Armadas*, p. 321.

during potential peace negotiations.<sup>244</sup> Now Pietro Aldobrandini lost patience. In late November, the cardinal wrote to Frangipani:

I recall that every time when Your Lordship wrote to me about the peace with England, I impressed upon you in reply that you had to remind His Highness that in this transaction it was necessary to have the right consideration for the Catholic religion and for the poor Catholics in this kingdom. Now that Your Lordship contacts me on this anew ..., our lord [Clement VIII] also anew orders that I tell you not to stop reminding Their Highnesses that, if they conclude this peace for the tranquillity of their states and they leave negotiating [affairs of] religion apart and this occasion is not used for obtaining some notable benefit for the divine cult and our holy faith, it cannot be hoped that it would be possible to attain the goal of the public tranquillity. On the other hand, if the goal of these transactions is [the interest of] religion, it can be expected that the Blessed Lord will make them prosper.<sup>245</sup>

The tone of the letter shows that Aldobrandini was now clearly annoyed with the archdukes and even with the nuncio. In Aldobrandini's opinion, in Brussels, they should all know Rome's position by now: the Spanish Habsburgs should only conclude peace with Elizabeth I if they were able to improve the situation of Catholicism in England. The nuncio therefore had 'to do as much as he could *humanamente* do' so that religious interests would not be neglected in the negotiations.<sup>246</sup> The pope thus did not share the opinion of those individuals in Flanders who thought that more could be achieved for the Catholic religion in England by private initiatives than in formal diplomatic negotiations.<sup>247</sup>

In his letter, Aldobrandini also appealed to Archduke Albert's honour in the pope's name: 'what would the world say if he ended up making peace with heretics without due respect for our religion for which he showed so much zeal'?<sup>248</sup> Clearly, in the pope's opinion the archduke – a Catholic prince who had only recently renounced his cardinal's hat in order to marry his cousin Isabella – should at the very least take the necessary steps to protect Catholicism in England if he wanted to make peace with Elizabeth I. Clement thus regarded peace between Catholics and Protestants as nothing more than a necessary evil which was justifiable only if it benefited the Catholic faith directly and immediately. The pope thus firmly insisted on concrete improvements for the Catholic religion as *a conditio sine qua non* for peace with 'heretics'. This policy was not carved in stone, as Chapters 5 and 6 of this thesis will show. In late 1599 and early 1600, however, the pope felt that he needed to increase his pressure on Albert and Isabella as peace negotiations between Spain, the archdukes and England became more probable.

By 4 December 1599, the Spanish Habsburgs and Elizabeth I seriously envisaged opening formal peace negotiations and Frangipani reported that the archducal court

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<sup>244</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.i, p. 73.

<sup>245</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 40, f. 51r: Aldobrandini to Frangipani, 27 Nov 1599. French summary: *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, p. 640.

<sup>246</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 40, f. 51r: Aldobrandini to Frangipani, 27 Nov 1599.

<sup>247</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.i, p. 88.

<sup>248</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 40, f. 51r–v: Aldobrandini to Frangipani, 27 Nov 1599.

expected the English queen to send envoys soon. The nuncio also informed Rome that the English deputies would first of all demand the exclusion of religious affairs from the negotiations. The English thought that the enemy would have to agree to this condition, given that Philip III and the archdukes were in need of peace. When the nuncio reminded Archduke Albert of his religious duties, Albert promised that he would work for the inclusion of articles in the peace treaty which favoured Catholicism in England. The archduke also affirmed that he believed Clement VIII would leave Philip III and himself to lead the negotiations and that the pope would not meddle in these matters.<sup>249</sup> To the archduke's annoyance, however, the pontiff decided to interfere even more.

Clement VIII was worried that the archdukes would neglect Catholicism in the peace talks. Therefore, at the beginning of January 1600, the pope ordered the issuing of two briefs for Albert and Isabella 'with the aim to move them to consider what fruit they could expect from a peace which neglected religion'.<sup>250</sup> On 8 January, Cardinal Aldobrandini forwarded these briefs to the nuncio and reiterated that neglecting the question of religion in the peace negotiations equated to the subordination of 'the cause of God and of the Holy Church to the laws of the world and the state'. As a former cardinal, Aldobrandini underlined again, Archduke Albert had a particular obligation to God and His divine cause.<sup>251</sup>

Since the briefs were addressed to two rulers, Archduke Albert and Archduchess Isabella, they did not contain any of the signs of impatience which could be found in Aldobrandini's letter for Frangipani. The briefs, dated 8 January 1600, for Albert and Isabella were nearly identical.<sup>252</sup> Clement VIII explained that he sent his briefs because he had heard that the archdukes intended to negotiate peace with the Dutch and the English.<sup>253</sup> However, Clement continued, there were 'very many and unknown people' who said that, in Brussels, they had no intention to include the interest of 'religion and of the cause of God' in these peace talks.<sup>254</sup> Of course, Clement VIII emphasised, he could hardly believe that any such rumours were to be true. His concern for his pastoral office, however, left the pope no other choice than to send these briefs<sup>255</sup> and to exhort the archdukes 'to keep the

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<sup>249</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.i, p. 76.

<sup>250</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 40, f. 52r: Aldobrandini to Frangipani, 2 Jan 1600.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 52v: Aldobrandini to Frangipani, 8 Jan 1600. French summary in: *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, p. 642.

<sup>252</sup> Louant edited the brief for Archduke Albert in: *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, pp. 773–774. For the brief for Archduchess Isabella, see: ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 44, ff. 12v–13v (no. 5): Clement VIII to Archduchess Isabella, 8 Jan 1600.

<sup>253</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, p. 773.

<sup>254</sup> ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 44, f. 13r: Clement VIII to Archduchess Isabella, 8 Jan 1600.

<sup>255</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, p. 773.

cause of God always before their eyes'.<sup>256</sup>

The rumours clearly worried the pope more than his polite words suggested: in February 1600, Clement VIII sent two more briefs to the archdukes in which he urged them not to differentiate between their cause and the cause of God.<sup>257</sup> Thus the pope insisted on the principle that religion had to receive priority over political interests. When presenting these exhortations, the nuncio had to repeat the pope's conviction that these negotiations offered a good opportunity to work for the benefit of Catholicism.<sup>258</sup> With the exception of sending a special envoy or a legate, dispatching a brief was the most formal and official means for the pontiff to express himself to another ruler. The pope's decision to send two briefs on the same topic within one month therefore shows that Clement VIII was highly concerned that the archdukes would end up prioritising their pressing political interests (peace with England) over those of religion (the Catholic cause in England). In Brussels, the pope's apprehension and exhortations were not received well.

The nuncio in Brussels reported on 29 January that he had handed over the briefs of early January to the archdukes, urging them not to neglect the question of religion during the peace negotiations.<sup>259</sup> In February 1600, Archduke Albert responded by showing himself hurt that Clement VIII would believe rumours and inventions that he did not have the Catholic cause in mind when negotiating peace with England.<sup>260</sup> When Frangipani presented the archduke with the pope's second brief, Albert showed himself astonished that Clement had repeatedly displayed such a lack of trust in the archduke's dedication to the cause of Catholicism.<sup>261</sup> Archduke Albert's irritated response to the papal briefs probably represented the summit of his annoyance.

It seems that he resented the unrelenting reminders delivered by Frangipani on Clement VIII's behalf. Even before the nuncio presented the archdukes with Clement VIII's first two briefs for them, on 22 January, Archduke Albert gave Frangipani an unexpected answer when the nuncio addressed him on the introduction of religious matters in the English peace talks. Albert assured the nuncio that he and Philip III would try to comply with Clement VIII's wishes. Yet, Albert also could not refrain from reminding Frangipani that his envoys had intended to introduce securities for the Catholic religion in France during the peace negotiations in Vervins in 1598. The pope's legate, Cardinal de' Medici,

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<sup>256</sup> ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 44, f. 13r: Clement VIII to Archduchess Isabella, 8 Jan 1600.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid., ff. 67v–68r (no. 77): Clement VIII to Archduke Albert, 10 Feb 1600; *ibid.*, ff. 68v–69r (no. 78): Clement VIII to Archduchess Isabella, 10 Feb 1600.

<sup>258</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 40, f. 54r: Aldobrandini to Frangipani, 11 Feb 1600. French summary in: *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, p. 644.

<sup>259</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.i, p. 88.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., vol. III.ii, p. 774.

<sup>261</sup> Ibid., vol. III.i, p. 132.

however, had pointed out that the task of defending the Catholic faith in the kingdoms of others belonged to one prince alone: the supreme pontiff. Now, the archduke added, many people thought that the same would be true for England.<sup>262</sup> In other words, Albert suggested that the pope should let the Spanish Habsburgs make peace with Elizabeth I and then ought to look after the improvement of the religious situation in England himself.

Albert's biting remark should be understood as a sign of his annoyance that the pope kept exhorting the archdukes to their religious duties without being of any actual help. Albert certainly was aware that the French peace negotiations could not be compared to those with England. The Holy See had resumed formal diplomatic relations with France in 1595 and thus the head of the Catholic Church had the means to remind the convert Henry IV of his obligations towards the Catholic faith.<sup>263</sup> As a consequence of England's break with Rome, there were, on the other hand, no formal diplomatic contacts between Elizabeth I and the Holy See. If the pope wanted to achieve anything for Catholicism in England by means of diplomacy, he had to rely on other princes, such as Archduke Albert, as the next chapter highlights. Moreover, Albert was certainly aware that during the peace negotiations in Vervins, the cardinal–legate had suppressed the discussion of securities for the Catholic Church in France because such a discussion implied that Henry IV was not truly dedicated to Catholicism. In turn, this suggested that the French king had feigned his conversion and, by extension, that the pope's absolution of Henry had been a mistake. In the end, Archduke Albert's complaints did not deter Rome from keeping up its pressure on him.

As early as in the 1560s, the Spanish had accused the French of following a 'bad' reason of state which subordinated religious to political interests while Spain only defended the interest of religion without any political goals in mind.<sup>264</sup> Forty years later, the Spanish Habsburgs still used the interest of religion in order to justify its policies. In late April 1600, Cardinal Aldobrandini therefore decided to use Spain's religious justifications for its wars and to turn them against Archduke Albert as the opening of the peace negotiations in Boulogne-sur-Mer drew near.

Cardinal Aldobrandini repeated in a letter to the nuncio in Flanders that he had to speak to the archdukes about the interest of Catholicism, which had to be their primary concern. The cardinal pointed out that 'the Catholic King has waged war for religious reasons alone for so many years'. How then would it now be 'possible ... to negotiate peace with the enemies and leave aside [religion] which has rendered such a just title to the war

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<sup>262</sup> Ibid., pp. 86–87.

<sup>263</sup> Barbiche, 'Clément VIII et la France', p. 100.

<sup>264</sup> Bertrand Haan, 'Le laboratoire de la raison d'État', *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, 129 (2015), pp. 219–230.

until now'? In Aldobrandini's opinion 'such a thing' was certainly not possible without seriously tarnishing the reputation of the Spanish Habsburgs. The cardinal also emphasised that the archdukes had to follow the pope's advice and to work 'for the service of the Blessed Lord and for the benefit of the people' in these negotiations. Otherwise, the rest of the world would draw its own conclusions about the ulterior motives which the Spanish Habsburgs 'might have had in the past'.<sup>265</sup>

The pope's nephew clearly insinuated that Spain had not waged its wars against France and England out of religious conviction but for political gain: after all, the Spanish had tried to install the Infanta Isabella on the French throne and projected to do the same in England.<sup>266</sup> Pietro Aldobrandini thus employed the religious justifications for Spain's war with Elizabeth I and the reputation of the Spanish Habsburgs as Catholic princes against any ideas that matters of religion could be left out of the peace negotiations with England.

On 13 May, Frangipani informed Rome that, finally, Elizabeth I permitted her deputies to discuss articles which related to religion and which prescribed England to abandon its Dutch allies.<sup>267</sup> It nearly seemed that the impending peace negotiations were about to take exactly the course upon which Clement had insisted for such a long time. Eventually, on 28 May 1600, delegates from England, Spain and Flanders met in Boulogne-sur-Mer and opened formal peace negotiations, without the participation of the Dutch 'rebels'.<sup>268</sup> A conflict of precedence, however, soon overshadowed the negotiations.<sup>269</sup> Moreover, the Dutch undermined the peace talks between England and the Spanish Habsburgs by embarking on a major attack on fortified places which were under the control of the archdukes.

After a serious defeat of the archducal army at Nieuwpoort, the English deputies thought that the enemy, militarily weakened and hence in a bad negotiating position, would now yield to the demands of Elizabeth I. The Habsburgs, on the other hand, deemed that their reputation had already received too much damage and that they could therefore not make any concessions. Thus, the States General had achieved one of the goals behind their offensive: the peace negotiations reached a stalemate and were abandoned in early

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<sup>265</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 40, f. 56r: Aldobrandini to Frangipani, 29 April 1600. French summary in: *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, p. 646.

<sup>266</sup> Albert J. Loomie, 'Philip III. and the Stuart succession in England, 1600–1603', *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 43 (1965), pp. 492–494.

<sup>267</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.i, p. 134.

<sup>268</sup> Frangipani informed the curia that the Dutch refused to open peace talks on 22 January 1600: *ibid.*, p. 86.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. III.ii, p. 776. For more details on this conflict of precedence, see: Thewlis, *Peace*, pp. 182–185; Laffleur de Kermaingant, *L'Ambassade de France*, vol. I, pp. 422–430, 435–439. See also the discussion of this topic in the correspondence between Archduke Albert and his deputies: AGR, *Audience*, 363, ff. 66r–170v, 226r–239r.

August.<sup>270</sup> Arguably, on a more international level, Clement VIII also contributed to the failure of the peace talks in Boulogne-sur-Mer.

Not long after the Holy See had concluded peace between Philip III, Henry IV and Duke Charles Emmanuel I of Savoy in 1598, tensions between the French king and the other two princes increased again in 1599 and 1600. At the core of these tensions was the dispute of Henry IV and Charles Emmanuel I over the marquisate of Saluzzo which controlled important alpine passages between France and the Italian peninsula. The peace treaty of Vervins had charged Clement VIII to decide to which of the two princes the marquisate belonged rightfully within one year. Clement VIII, conversely, was wary to pronounce a judgment, fearing that his decision would irritate one or even both parties. Moreover, it was in the interest of the pope as an Italian prince to keep the French out of Italy and therefore not to decide in favour of Henry IV.<sup>271</sup> According to the Spanish ambassador in Rome, the pontiff delayed rendering his judgement in the hope that he could make the two parties find a compromise which favoured Savoy.<sup>272</sup>

In February 1600 Henry IV and Charles Emmanuel reached an agreement in the Treaty of Paris but the duke delayed its execution and eventually Henry IV declared war on the duke (11 August 1600).<sup>273</sup> In the end, the pope's nephew, Cardinal Aldobrandini, negotiated a treaty which settled the dispute between the two princes (Peace Treaty of Lyons, 1601).<sup>274</sup> Clement VIII's considerations for his interests as an Italian prince and his hesitation in removing the apple of discord between Henry IV and Charles Emmanuel I, however, had detrimental effects on Spain's bargaining position in Boulogne: when the Spanish Habsburgs and England opened the peace talks in late May 1600, war between France and Spain's ally, the duke of Savoy, was imminent. Spain risked getting distracted by another war.

On 1 July 1600, the nuncio in Flanders warned the Holy See that it seemed that Henry IV was attempting to thwart the peace talks between the Habsburgs and the queen of England. In Flanders, presumably at the archducal court, they suspected that the French king hoped that Elizabeth would turn her army against Savoy's ally, Philip III. Such an English military action, they feared, would make it more difficult for Spain to assist Charles Emmanuel I in the imminent Franco-Sabaudian war.<sup>275</sup> In Spain, the king's council

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<sup>270</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty*, pp. 118–123.

<sup>271</sup> Imhof, *Friede*, pp. 201–218; Haan, 'La dernière paix', pp. 24, 49–51, 57–61; Haan, 'La médiation pontificale', pp. 6–8. For Clement VIII's reluctance to pronounce a judgment on these differences, see: Schneider, '"Types"', pp. 90–93.

<sup>272</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 971, no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 3 June 1599.

<sup>273</sup> Haan, 'Le traité', pp. 48–50.

<sup>274</sup> Haan, 'La médiation pontificale', passim.

<sup>275</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.i, p. 154.

thought that the queen regarded Henry IV's firm dealings with the duke of Savoy as a threat for Spain and that she intended to use this to her advantage.<sup>276</sup> Clearly, the impending war between France and Savoy, which had the potential to escalate in a renewal of the Franco-Spanish conflict, undermined the negotiations in Boulogne-sur-Mer.

In late September 1600, two months after the outbreak of the Franco-Sabaudian war and after the interruption of the negotiations in Boulogne, Frangipani related that the English and the Habsburgs considered resuming the peace talks. This time, however, Frangipani believed, the Spanish Habsburgs would not agree to any talks on French territory, given the past machinations of Henry IV and of his representatives in Boulogne-sur-Mer.<sup>277</sup> The pope's failure to resolve the strife between France and Savoy thus further complicated the international situation in summer 1600. Evidently, Clement VIII's reluctance to comply with his duties as supreme peacemaker and -keeper in Catholic Christendom added to the sense that the Spanish Habsburgs were negotiating from a weak bargaining position in Boulogne. Under such circumstances, it was impossible for Spain and the archdukes to make peace, let alone to demand religious concession from the English. After the abortive negotiations in summer 1600, there were further tepid attempts at rapprochement but, in the end, only Elizabeth I's death and the accession of James VI/I in 1603 gave way to successful peace negotiations.<sup>278</sup>

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The findings in this chapter underline Johannes Burkhardt's observation that the early modern papacy did not consider promoting peace between Catholic and Protestant sovereign powers. Yet, it is necessary to emphasise that Clement VIII also was not opposed to such a peace: the pope neither exhorted the Spanish Habsburgs to continue their war against the English 'heretics' nor did he object to an Anglo-Spanish agreement. Instead, the pope insisted firmly that peace could only be concluded if it also directly benefitted the Catholic religion in England.

In the preliminary negotiations which led to the Franco-Spanish peace (1598) the French and Spanish kings thought that the pontiff would possibly admit 'heretics', even representatives of Elizabeth I, to papal peace talks or to include Protestant powers in a peace treaty negotiated in the pope's name. Moreover, Clement VIII's success as a peacemaker between France and Spain and his desire to form a league against the Ottomans

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<sup>276</sup> Thewlis, *Peace*, p. 185.

<sup>277</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.i, p. 154.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. LXXXIX–XC.



led to rumours in Rome that Clement would seek peace between the Spanish Habsburgs and England. Clement VIII and Cardinal Aldobrandini, however, rejected any such idea.

The pontiff undoubtedly would never have entered into diplomatic contact with Elizabeth I for as long as she remained a 'heretic' and thus also did not give the pope any reason for lifting her excommunication. In as much as the introduction of articles in favour of Protestant powers in the Franco-Spanish peace treaty was concerned, Clement VIII and Cardinal Aldobrandini emphasised that this would be contrary to 'the dignity of the pope' and to the religious interests which the pope had to defend as the head of the Catholic Church: a Franco-Spanish peace treaty, negotiated in the pope's name, could not name Protestant powers and included articles which benefitted 'heretics'. Clement VIII certainly did not want to help the confessional enemy to any advantages nor did he want to be seen as openly promoting cross-confessional agreements. As this thesis will show, the Aldobrandini pontiff was, however, willing to promote agreements across confessional borders discretely by indirect or informal diplomatic channels when he deemed that such activities would benefit Catholicism.

As we have seen in Chapters 1 and 2, Aquinas as well as early modern thinkers and popes thought that Catholics and even papal representatives could have contact with 'heretics' if such contacts entailed an improvement for the Catholic religion, in particular the conversion of 'heretics'. Clement VIII and Cardinal Aldobrandini clearly shared this opinion and thought that Catholic princes, with the exception of the papacy, could maintain diplomatic contact with 'heretical' powers if they ensured that peaceful relations with Protestants also improved the lot of the Catholics in their dominions. Unlike early modern canonist thinkers like Alfonso de Castro (see Chapter 1), the Aldobrandini pontiff therefore did not regard it as a duty of Catholic princes to wage a religious war against 'heretics' under all circumstances, not even against an excommunicate like Elizabeth I. It seems, however, that the pope did not deem that the Spanish Habsburgs would need to observe any potential agreement with Elizabeth I or with any other 'heretical' power: as we have seen, Clement VIII told Henry IV in 1597 that he was not obliged to remain allied with Elizabeth I because Catholics did not need to keep the *fides* given to a 'heretic' anyway.

The preliminary peace negotiations between the Spanish Habsburgs and Elizabeth I in 1599–1600 reveal Rome's difficulties which arose from the presence of Protestant rulers in the international power system. The pope's refusal to deal with 'heretics' on a formal, diplomatic level restrained the scope of his diplomatic action and incapacitated the pontiff from fulfilling his traditional role as peacemaker as soon as a conflict involved Protestant powers, even when he deemed that the conclusion of peace was desirable or necessary.

Clement VIII was not able to influence the peace negotiations in Boulogne-sur-Mer directly because he would not act as a peacemaker between Catholic and Protestant powers, at least not officially. He could only exert pressure on the archdukes, exhorting them repeatedly to prioritise religious interests over political concerns and demands.

Archduke Albert – whose desire for peace was well-known at the time – felt insulted by the pope's insinuations that he would make peace without due regard for Catholicism in England. The Spanish court also feared that the archdukes would want to postpone negotiating affairs of religion and make peace at all cost. Omitting to work for the Catholic religion in England, however, would have vindicated Spain's critics who saw in the wars of the Spanish kings political ambition cloaked in religious zeal. Therefore, the pope's policy that peace with the 'heretical' queen was possible only if it entailed an improvement for the Catholic faith corresponded with the opinion of Philip III. As the next two chapters demonstrate, the Spanish were less satisfied with Clement VIII when it came to his policy towards the resolution of the English succession crisis and towards King James VI/I.

### **Clement VIII and the Stuart Accession (1599–1603)**

In the early hours of 3 April 1603 (New Style), Elizabeth I died without leaving any direct heir and the English Privy Council proclaimed King James VI Stuart as the new king of England.<sup>279</sup> As we will see in Chapters 5 and 6, the Stuart accession also had an impact on Clement VIII's attitude towards Anglo-Spanish peace negotiations and opened new perspectives for the pacification of the Low Countries. It is therefore first necessary to consider Clement VIII's stance towards the Protestant king before and after his accession in England.

Philip II had contested James's pretensions to the English throne for years before 1603. The Spanish king claimed the English crown for his daughter, Isabella Clara Eugenia, for whom, as we have seen, he had also tried to secure the French throne. After Philip II's death in September 1598, Philip III reconsidered this policy. Ultimately, however, the failure of the Boulogne-sur-Mer negotiations and requests of English Catholics in exile moved Philip III to decide in favour of pursuing his sister's claim in February 1601.<sup>280</sup> James, aware that his accession in England was far from guaranteed, saw himself compelled to work for the English crown. He therefore emphasised his dedication to the Protestant cause at Elizabeth I's court; at the same time, he showed himself inclined towards the Catholic faith at courts loyal to Rome in order to preclude any possible obstruction from Catholic princes to his accession in England. James VI did not even refrain from signalling his friendly disposition towards the Catholic religion to the pope.<sup>281</sup>

The English succession crisis and the Stuart accession have been the object of

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<sup>279</sup> I address, without repetition of material, some of these issues in: 'A kingdom for a Catholic? Pope Clement VIII, King James VI/I, and the English succession in international diplomacy (1592–1605)', *The International History Review*, 37 (2015), pp. 119–141.

<sup>280</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty*, p. 164. The infanta's claim derived from her descent from the oldest daughter of John of Gaunt, duke of Lancaster (1340–1399). See: Susan Doran, 'James VI and the English succession', in Ralph Houlbrooke (ed.), *James VI and I: Ideas, Authority, and Government* (Aldershot, 2006), p. 29; Allen, *Philip III*, pp. 99–114; Thewlis, *Peace*, pp. 154–177.

<sup>281</sup> Doran, 'James VI', p. 29; John D. Mackie, 'A secret agent of James VI', *Scottish Historical Review*, 9 (1912), p. 377.

numerous historical studies.<sup>282</sup> Although there is research with an international approach to the English succession crisis,<sup>283</sup> it is inherent to the topic that it has predominantly received scholarly attention from a British perspective.<sup>284</sup> In the second half of the nineteenth century, transcriptions of primary sources relating to British history, held in Roman archives, became available in the United Kingdom and in 1881, the *Vatican Secret Archives* opened to scholars.<sup>285</sup> This triggered intensive research on the relations between James VI/I and Rome in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>286</sup> However, these scholarly pieces concentrated on the secret agents which King James and Queen Anne sent to Rome rather than on Clement VIII's political and religious goals. Moreover, they tend to present Clement VIII as a credulous victim duped by a deceiving, unscrupulous king of Scotland into believing that he would convert to Catholicism after his English accession.<sup>287</sup> Until today, these studies constitute the core research on Clement VIII's involvement in the English succession.<sup>288</sup> As a consequence, even recent research on the English succession crisis tends to underestimate Clement VIII's diplomatic and political activities and presents the pope's interpretation of the positive signs which emanated from Scotland as much more enthusiastic than it actually was.

This and the next chapter move the focus away from King James's diplomatic manoeuvres and, instead, assess Rome's stance towards the monarch's potential accession in England and towards a possible peace between the Spanish Habsburgs and James VI/I. From a strict canonical point of view, King James was not a legitimate ruler: with his fall

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<sup>282</sup> Schneider, 'A kingdom', p. 120.

<sup>283</sup> E.g.: Croft, 'Rex Pacificus', pp. 140–154; Leo Hicks, 'Sir Robert Cecil, Father Persons and the succession, 1600–1601', *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu*, 24 (1955), pp. 95–139; Joel Hurstfield, 'The Succession Struggle in Late Elizabethan England', in Stanley T. Bindoff, Joel Hurstfield and Charles H. Williams (eds.), *Elizabethan Government and Society: Essays Presented to Sir John Neale* (London, 1961), pp. 369–396.

<sup>284</sup> For recent examples of studies with a predominantly British perspective see: Jean-Christophe Mayer (ed.), *The Struggle for the Succession in Late Elizabethan England: Politics, Polemics and Cultural Representations* (Montpellier, 2004); Glenn Burgess, Rowland Wymer and Jason Lawrence (eds.), *The Accession of James I: Historical and Cultural Consequences* (Basingstoke, 2006). The more international approach of Pauline Croft's contribution in the latter collection forms a notable exception: Croft, 'Rex Pacificus', pp. 140–154.

<sup>285</sup> Stefano Villani, 'Britain and the papacy: diplomacy and conflict in the sixteenth and seventeenth century', in Visceglia (ed.), *Papato*, pp. 304–305.

<sup>286</sup> E.g.: Samuel R. Gardiner, *History of England from the Accession of James I. to the Outbreak of the Civil War, 1603–1642*, vol. I (1603–1607) (London, 1884), pp. 80–81, 97–98, 140–143, 224–226; Remi Couzard, *Une ambassade à Rome sous Henri IV (septembre 1601–juin 1605) d'après des documents inédits* (Tonneins, 1900), pp. 71–145; Arnold O. Meyer, 'Clemens VIII. und Jakob I. von England', *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken*, 7 (1904), pp. 266–306; George F. Warner, 'James VI and Rome', *English Historical Review*, 20 (1905), pp. 124–127; Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIV, pp. 41–80.

<sup>287</sup> Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', pp. 275, 278, 281, 285, 288–289; Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIV, pp. 49, 60, 63, 73; Gardiner, *History of England*, p. 225. Willson is less condemning but still allocates the pope the role of a victim of King James's duplicity: David H. Willson, *King James VI and I* (London, 1956), pp. 138, 148, 221.

<sup>288</sup> For more recent studies, see: Leo Hicks, 'The embassy of Sir Anthony Standen in 1603', *Recusant History*, 5 (1959–1960), pp. 91–127, 184–222; 6 (1961–1962), pp. 163–194; 7 (1963–1964), pp. 50–81; Barbiche, *Bulla*, pp. 477–507.

from the Catholic faith, he had automatically incurred the major excommunication and thus lost all his rights in the Christian community, his rights to fulfil a public office as a ruler included. The Stuart king, however, had not been excommunicated *nominatim* by any pontiff. Arguably, in accordance with Martin V's decretal *Ad evitanda scandala*, this left room for Catholic powers to establish diplomatic contact with the king legitimately even though it was commonly known that he was a 'heretic'. As seen, Pius IV sent Commendone on a diplomatic mission to Protestant princes in the empire even though it was contrary to mediaeval canon law to establish official diplomatic contact with any Protestant ruler since this would have implied that Rome formally and openly recognised that a sovereign who had incurred the major excommunication *latae sententiae* still rightfully ruled over his dominions (see Chapters 1 and 2).

This chapter shows that Clement VIII attempted to assure King James of his benevolence, tried to influence the king via informal and indirect diplomatic channels and even indicated that he would consider sending a secret agent to James VI/I after his accession if he could expect an improvement for the Catholic cause in England from such a mission. The present chapter first analyses epistolary ceremonial in briefs for James VI and Anne of Denmark and highlights how Clement reacted to indications from Scotland that James VI might convert to Catholicism. The second subchapter studies the various channels of communication which Rome tried to exploit in 1603 for influencing James VI/I in absence of formal diplomatic relations between the Holy See and the new, Protestant king of England. The purpose of this and the next chapter is also to show that despite hopes that James might convert and despite the pope's signals of benevolence for the Stuart king, Clement VIII's attitude towards James was more critical and pragmatic than is traditionally suggested in historiography.

#### **4.1. Signs of good will from Scotland (1599–1603)**

In August 1602, Clement VIII sent a brief to James VI in which he greeted him as 'Serenissimo rex salutem et apostolicam benedictionem et Deo pulsanti cordis ostium aperire'.<sup>289</sup> This was an unusual salutation: it contained an apostolic benediction, which the pope usually reserved for Catholics, in a brief for a Protestant ruler. Recent scholarship has rediscovered the significance of epistolary ceremonial in the early modern period. This subchapter uses these scholarly findings and focuses on epistolary ceremonial – and alterations to it – in the correspondence of Clement VIII with James VI and his wife, Queen Anne.

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<sup>289</sup> Clement VIII to James VI, 9 Aug 1602, in *CSP*, vol. XIII.ii, p. 1151.

Alexander Koller demonstrated that seemingly minor innovations in the wording of a text, such as an oration, could gravely affect the political position or reputation of early modern rulers.<sup>290</sup> Moreover, Giora Sternberg has argued that historians should pay closer attention to epistolary ceremonial, that is, 'the ways in which letter form signified status relations between correspondents'. Sternberg emphasised that studying epistolary ceremonial allows scholars to analyse status as it manifested itself directly in written form instead of having to rely on second-hand descriptions of performances which were spatially and temporally restricted to the court.<sup>291</sup> In 2014, Toby Osborne adapted Sternberg's findings for an analysis of epistolary ceremonial in princely and diplomatic correspondence. In his essay, Osborne further explored Robert Oresko's and his own work on the ambition of the dukes of Savoy to obtain royal status. Osborne emphasised that the titles of address which princes and Sabaudian ambassadors used in letters for the dukes of Savoy indicate the degree to which Savoy enjoyed recognition as a royal house on the international stage (by the other princes) and domestically (by the Sabaudian ambassadors abroad who remained subjects of Savoy).<sup>292</sup>

Osborne's essay shows that epistolary ceremonial and innovations in formulations in courtly correspondence can shed light on relations among princes as well as between rulers and their subjects. This insight is particularly useful in cases where there are not any primary sources such as minutes of the meeting of a royal council which reveal information about decisions which were taken at a court or diplomatic correspondence which clearly spells out a monarch's intentions. In the case of Clement VIII, no evidence has yet been found from the pope's direct environment on how the pontiff intended to handle the promises of James VI's good will towards the Catholic religion: the pontiff, King James and Queen Anne proceeded with outmost secrecy in their exchange of messages. It is possible that Clement VIII chose to discuss this matter with Cardinal Santori and at meetings of the Roman inquisition but, so far, historians who concentrate on the sometimes tense relations between Clement VIII and the Holy Office (see Chapter 2) have not indicated that this has

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<sup>290</sup> Koller, *Imperator*, pp. 88–102.

<sup>291</sup> Giora Sternberg, 'Epistolary ceremonial: corresponding status at the time of Louis XIV', *Past and Present*, 204 (2009), p. 35.

<sup>292</sup> Toby Osborne, 'Language and sovereignty: the use of titles and Savoy's royal declaration of 1632', in Sarah Alyn Stacey (ed.), *Political, Religious and Social Conflict in the States of Savoy (1400–1700)* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 26–33. See also: Toby Osborne, 'The surrogate war between the Savoys and the Medici: sovereignty and precedence in early modern Italy', *The International History Review*, 29 (2007), pp. 1–21; Toby Osborne, 'The House of Savoy and the Theatre of the World: performances of sovereignty in early-modern Rome', in Matthew Vester (ed.), *Sabaudian Studies: Political Culture, Dynasty, and Territory (1400–1700)* (Kirkville, Missouri, 2013), pp. 167–190. For Oresko's influential essay, see: Robert Oresko, 'The House of Savoy in search for the royal crown', in Graham Gibbs, Robert Oresko and Hamish Scott (eds.), *Royal and Republican Sovereignty in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Memory of Ragnhild Hatton* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 272–350.

been the case: more research in this area will certainly be necessary since, potentially, it might unearth further evidence on the pope's decisions – and on possible opposition to them – in matters relating to the Stuart accession. This, however, will require more extensive research which, if it proves to be fruitful, will need to be addressed in a further study. In the meantime, this subchapter examines forms of address, salutations and subscriptions in the exchange of letters of Pope Clement VIII with James VI and Queen Anne to demonstrate that the pontiff responded cautiously to indications from Scotland that James VI fostered a propensity towards Catholicism. This subchapter thus demonstrates that close attention to epistolary ceremonial can reveal subtle changes in the signals of good will which the pontiff wished to send to the Scottish king and his wife.

Irregular contact between Rome and James VI had already existed for nearly two decades when, in spring 1603, the Scottish king eventually secured the English crown. Already in 1584, James VI had asked the papacy to assist him in ascending to the English throne and in 1595–1596, almost certainly on the king's order, John Ogilvy of Pourie (d. 1601) tried to win the pope, among other Catholic princes, for the cause of the Scottish king.<sup>293</sup> Not much is known about the impact of Ogilvy's dealings in Rome but the timing of his mission could not have been any better: after Henry of Navarre's conversion, as we have seen, Clement VIII lifted his excommunication in September 1595. The pontiff certainly was not averse to James VI's attempts of rapprochement in the hope that he would follow Henry IV's example one day or that he would at least allow his Catholic subjects to practise their religion. The Scottish king tried to nourish this hope further at the close of the sixteenth century.

In 1599, King James tasked the Scottish Catholic Sir Edward Drummond to convey a letter to the pope.<sup>294</sup> In it, James VI asked Clement VIII to create the bishop of Vaison, William Chisholm (c. 1547–1629), a cardinal.<sup>295</sup> James justified this request explaining that the presence of a Scottish cardinal at the papal curia would also lead to an improvement of the relations between Rome and Scotland.<sup>296</sup> As Arnold Oskar Meyer rightly asserted, James VI did not commit himself to anything and did not mention that he considered converting.<sup>297</sup> Conversely, the king's letter used a salutation, title of address and subscription which was unusual for a Protestant monarch.

James VI addressed the pope as 'Beatissime Pater' in the salutation, thrice called him by the title of 'vestra sanctitas' and ended the letter with the subscription 'Beatitudinis

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<sup>293</sup> Fry, 'Catholic diplomacy', p. 274; Mackie, 'A secret agent', pp. 377–378.

<sup>294</sup> Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 274.

<sup>295</sup> James VI to Clement VIII, 24 Sept 1599 [O.S.], in *CSP*, vol. XIII.ii, p. 1144.

<sup>296</sup> Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 274.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*

vestrae obsequentissimus filius'.<sup>298</sup> James VI thus shared in the traditional Catholic rhetoric typical in correspondence between the pontiff and Catholic princes: the pope was exalted as 'holy' and as a loving father of the rulers of Christendom who, in turn, were his obedient or compliant children. By sharing in this rhetoric and presenting himself as 'the most' or a 'very submitting son' ('obsequentissimus' could be read either as a superlative or as an elative), the Protestant king suggested that he acknowledged the pontiff as the spiritual head of Christendom.<sup>299</sup> Thus James VI, baptised a Catholic as an infant, did not promise to convert back to the Catholic faith in the letter itself. Yet, the salutation, subscription and title of address certainly aimed at conveying the impression that he was more than simply well-disposed towards Clement VIII.

As seen at the beginning of this subchapter, epistolary ceremonial allowed early modern rulers to negotiate and recognise status. James VI was fully aware that his adherence to Catholic epistolary ceremonial implied, or at least suggested, that he recognised the pontiff's position as spiritual head of Christendom. In November 1603, King James VI/I wrote to his ambassador in Paris that he wished the pope to know that he had not replied in writing to a brief of Clement VIII in 1602 (see below) because he had seen himself confronted with two equally unacceptable options. The king would have had to concede to the pontiff all the titles which the pope claimed for himself and thus would have acted against his conscience and his reputation among other Protestant princes. The king had only one alternative.

King James explained in his letter that he could have refrained from yielding those titles to the pope which the pontiff conceived to be rightfully his. In this case, however, James would have offended Clement VIII and this he did not want to do. As a consequence, King James had meant to send a secret envoy who had to convey a message orally but his agent's departure had to be postponed due to a long illness.<sup>300</sup> The king's concern underlines the importance of epistolary ceremonial in the early modern period and that it was a

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<sup>298</sup> James VI to Clement VIII, 24 Sept 1599 [O.S.], in *CSP*, vol. XIII.ii, p. 1144. See also: Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 273.

<sup>299</sup> For observations on the importance of the difference between the superlative and the elative in Rudolf II's oration of obedience to Pope Gregory XIII, see: Koller, *Imperator*, p. 97.

<sup>300</sup> James VI/I to Thomas Parry, [early Nov 1603], in Mark A. Tierney (ed.), *Dodd's [pseudonym for Hugh Tootell] Church History of England: From the Commencement of the Sixteenth Century to the Revolution in 1688, with Notes, Additions, and a Continuation*, vol. IV (London, 1841), p. lxx. A translation of the letter from Latin into English is published in: Montague S. Giuseppi (ed.), *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquess of Salisbury, preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire*, vol. XV (London, 1930), pp. 299–302. On 14 December 1603, Nuncio Del Bufalo informed Cardinal Aldobrandini that James VI/I had replied to his letter via Parry. See: *Del Bufalo*, p. 616. Tierney dated the letter 1603 or 1604; Meyer dated it late 1604. Giuseppi pointed out that the letter had been added to a draft letter for Parry dated 6 November 1603 and Patterson wrote that the nuncio in Paris had received it on 17 November 1603. See: Tierney (ed.), *Church*, vol. IV, p. lxvi; Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 274; Giuseppi (ed.), *Calendar*, vol. XV, p. 302; William B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 41 (footnote 46).



particularly delicate issue for a non-Catholic prince who intended to contact the pope. It also demonstrates that the intention of the king's salutation of Clement VIII as 'Beatissime Pater', the concession to address the pope by his title as 'vestra sanctitas' and the subscription 'Beatitudinis vestrae obsequentissimus filius' in 1599 aimed at suggesting that he accepted the pontiff as the spiritual head of Christendom. King James's decision not to reply to the pope in writing in 1602 probably was the result of a lesson learnt after he had sent his letter of 1599 to Clement VIII.

To James VI's misfortune, his missive for Clement VIII was intercepted and shown to Elizabeth I. Since the Scottish king did not want to risk his nomination as her heir, he had to assure her that the letter was a forgery.<sup>301</sup> This was not the last time that his missive caused problems. In 1608, during the controversy over the Oath of Allegiance, Cardinal Bellarmine used James's letter to remind him of his former approaches to Rome. The monarch therefore set up a royal enquiry which subsequently cleared him of Bellarmine's 'allegations', concluding that the king's secretary had tricked James VI into signing the letter in 1599.<sup>302</sup> However, it seems more likely that the letter formed part of James's strategy for persuading the pontiff and other Catholic rulers not to obstruct his accession in England. This can be inferred from a second mission of Sir Edward Drummond to Rome. This time, however, Drummond was sent in the name of the king's consort, Anne of Denmark.

As we will see, on 13 April 1600, Clement VIII replied to James VI's letter of 1599. Subsequently, Queen Anne – a Catholic convert – decided to reply to Clement VIII's brief on behalf of her husband.<sup>303</sup> In July 1601, she instructed Sir Edward Drummond to inform Clement of her conversion, that her children were educated by Catholics and that James would soon grant liberty of conscience to his Catholic subjects. Drummond had to explain to Clement that Elizabeth I had learnt of James's earlier letter for the pope. Drummond also had to point out that James did not want to imperil his nomination as Elizabeth's successor and thus refrained from answering the papal brief. The king therefore allowed Queen Anne to reply to the papal missive in his stead.<sup>304</sup> This was a clever diplomatic move.

Anne's status as queen consort made her 'important enough ... to imply power and authority' and 'yet, she was also unofficial enough to allow James to distance himself from

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<sup>301</sup> Fry, 'Catholic diplomacy', pp. 274–275.

<sup>302</sup> Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', pp. 273–275. For the controversy, see: Patterson, *Christendom*, pp. 75–123; Motta, *Bellarmino: una teologia politica*, pp. 385–416; Motta, *La fede*, pp. 5–20.

<sup>303</sup> Fry, 'Catholic diplomacy', pp. 270, 274–276; Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 279. For Queen Anne's conversion, see: Albert J. Loomie, 'King James I's Catholic Consort', *The Huntington Library Quarterly*, 34 (1971), pp. 303–316.

<sup>304</sup> Queen Anne's (undated) instruction for Edward Drummond is edited in: Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', pp. 301–303. See also Fry, 'Catholic diplomacy', p. 276. A letter for Cardinal Borghese, the later Pope Paul V, contained similar concerns and assurances. See: Queen Anne to Cardinal Borghese, 31 July 1601, published in: Warner, 'James VI', pp. 126–127.

her actions'.<sup>305</sup> Drummond's second mission aimed to convey the message that Queen Anne could have a positive influence on James's religious policies. The aim clearly was to suggest that it was within the realm of possibilities that, as king of Scotland and England, James would grant liberty of conscience to his Catholic subjects and maybe even convert himself.<sup>306</sup> How did the pope react?

### ***Clement VIII's response to the encouraging signs from Scotland***

The reception in Rome of James VI's 1599 letter was colder than the Scottish king probably had anticipated. Clement VIII replied in a brief on 13 April 1600.<sup>307</sup> As we have seen, James VI had presented himself as submitting son of the Holy Father in 1599. The pontiff – unlike James VI – did not have recourse to the traditional 'father and son'-rhetoric in his brief because James was not a Catholic prince. Had the pope sent the brief to a secular Catholic prince, it would have opened with a salutation such as 'Dilecte fili nobilis vir' or 'Carissime in Christo fili Noster', followed by the formula 'salutem et apostolicam benedictionem'. James VI, however, was greeted by Clement VIII with the salutation 'Serenissime rex divinae gratiae lumen toto corde excipere usque ad perfectam diem'.<sup>308</sup>

A formal title, followed by the wish that the addressee would receive the light of the divine grace was, subject to a few variations, the standard salutation which the pope used for princes whom he considered as 'heretics', 'schismatics' and 'infidels': Protestants, members of the Eastern Orthodox Churches and Muslims.<sup>309</sup> This indicates more generally that in such formal epistolary interactions, the papal curia treated 'heretics' and 'schismatics' the same as 'infidels' since, from the curia's perspective, they all did not form part of the *respublica christiana*. But, as the next subchapter shows, there were also exceptions to this seemingly strict divide into 'in' and 'out' of the Christian community. Moreover, this also underlines that, in correspondence, Rome was willing to concede to 'heretics' their princely

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<sup>305</sup> Fry, 'Catholic diplomacy', p. 277.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., pp. 276–277.

<sup>307</sup> Clement VIII to James VI, 13 April 1600, in *CSP*, vol. XIII.ii, pp. 1145–1148.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid., p. 1145.

<sup>309</sup> E.g.: ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 44, f. 153v (no. 163): Clement VIII to the (Protestant) duke of Södermanland, 10 June 1600: 'Nobilis Dux, lumen divinae gratiae'; Clement VIII to the (Muslim) shah of Persia, 30 Sept 1592, edited in: Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIII, p. 437: 'Illustri Abasae potentissimo Persarum regi salutem et Spiritus veritatis illuminationem'; Clement VIII to the shah of Persia, 24 Feb and 2 May 1601, edited in: ibid, vol. XXIV, pp. 567 and 571: 'Rex potentissime et illustris, salutem et oblatum a Deo divinae gratiae lumen toto corde accipere'; Clement VIII to the (Russian Orthodox) grand-duke of Moscow, 28 April 1601, edited in: Aleksandr Ivanovich Turgenev, *Historica Russiae monumenta, ex antiquis exterarum gentium archivis et bibliothecis deprompta*, vol. II (Saint Petersburg, 1842), p. 54: 'Boris Domino Russiae etc., salutem, et omnis gratiae fructum'. Carlos Alonso's transcription of the salutation as 'Boris Domino Russiae etc., salutem, et apostolicam benedictionem' is a mistake. For Alonso's transcription, see: Alonso, 'Una embajada', p. 89. For verification see the brief in the papal register: ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 45, f. 106r (no. 116): Clement VIII to the grand-duke of Moscow, 28 April 1601.

titles, just as it did to non-Christians who, as Pope Innocent IV (r. 1243–1254) had already argued in the thirteenth century, possessed political *dominium* despite their adherence to another religion.<sup>310</sup> Given the importance attributed to titles in the early modern period, it would have been impossible for the papacy to correspond with non-Catholic princes if the papacy had refused to concede them their princely status in letters. This willingness to concede 'heretics' their princely status also reveals that an important reason for Rome's refusal to establish formal diplomatic contact with 'heretics' was that it did not want to be seen by the rest of the Catholic world as maintaining such relations with 'heretical' princes and thus as openly acknowledging them as rightful rulers.

As mentioned, a brief for a Catholic ruler would have contained an apostolic blessing in the salutation and in the subscription as well as several assurances of the pope's paternal love. James VI's brief did not include any of these elements, in keeping with papal letters to non-Catholics.<sup>311</sup> In terms of epistolary ceremonial, Clement VIII therefore clearly chose to treat James like any other non-Catholic prince, at least for the time being. In the brief, Clement VIII wrote that he had received James VI's letter very gladly. However, Clement continued, he would have welcomed the letter even more if James had announced his decision to convert. In his brief, Clement VIII pointed out that he had often heard with great satisfaction that James VI did not entirely abhor the Catholic religion; nay, apparently the king even harboured a special inclination towards it.

The rest of the long document was mainly a papal exhortation to the king to convert, based – in short – on the argument that there was no salvation outside the Catholic Church. The pontiff addressed the king's request of a cardinal's hat for the bishop of Vaison only at the end of the letter and only briefly: Clement VIII merely stated that he had already held the bishop in high esteem and now would do even more so in order to please the Scottish monarch.<sup>312</sup> Clearly, the pope did not completely rule out the possibility that James VI might convert some day. Maybe Baronio's advice to the pope to use moderation towards potential converts (Chapter 2), induced the pope not to show himself too intransigent? For as long as the king's polite words were not followed by deeds, however, Clement VIII likewise confined himself to pleasantries: the pontiff did not consider Chisholm's promotion to the cardinalate any further.<sup>313</sup>

In July 1600, Clement exhorted the English archpriest and clergy as well as the Catholic laity not to obey any new ruler suspected of heresy, irrespective of the validity of

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<sup>310</sup> Muldoon, *Popes*, pp. 9–11.

<sup>311</sup> Clement VIII to James VI, 13 April 1600, in *CSP*, vol. XIII.ii, pp. 1145–1148.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid. See also the summary in: Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 277.

<sup>313</sup> Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 277.

his or her claim to the English throne. Clement VIII also instructed the nuncio in Flanders to repeat this exhortation as soon as he learnt that Elizabeth I was dead.<sup>314</sup> Thus, James's demonstrations of good will towards the Catholic Church evidently had not convinced the pontiff enough by summer 1600. Two years later, however, the pope sent more encouraging signs to Scotland.

As we have seen, Queen Anne replied to Clement VIII's brief of April 1600 in the name of her husband: in summer 1601, she sent Sir Edward Drummond to Rome. On 16 July 1602, the pontiff wrote to Queen Anne that Drummond had informed him of her conversion. If Drummond told the truth, the pope continued, this would be a great joy indeed.<sup>315</sup> The pontiff's reservation about the truth of Anne's conversion clearly indicates that Clement VIII did not blindly believe every information and assurance which reached his ears from Scotland. The form of salutation in the pope's brief reflected this doubt too. The pontiff did not address Queen Anne as 'Carissima' or 'Dilecta filia' and did not bestow any apostolic blessing on her. Instead, he greeted her politely with a variation of the formula used for non-Catholics: 'Serenissimae regina salutem et divini luminis incrementum'.<sup>316</sup> Clement VIII thus indicated that he did not yet regard Queen Anne as a Catholic.

Of course, we now know that Queen Anne had converted secretly by 1600 but in 1602, Clement VIII had no proof of her conversion. A letter of the Spanish ambassador in Rome provides further evidence that Clement VIII did not believe the assurances of the queen consort unreservedly even after James's accession to the English throne. In early May 1603, Clement told the Spanish ambassador that Queen Anne had informed him that she was Catholic and that she hoped that her husband would also convert. Clement VIII emphasised that he suspected that this was 'some artifice' in order to give him false hopes and that this was potentially a trick of King James to use the pontiff as 'a means' of deceiving Philip III 'and other Catholic princes so that they would not obstruct his succession in England'. By May 1603, Clement VIII had heard from several other sources that the queen was secretly a Catholic indeed but he deemed that only now that King James VI/I had secured the English crown it would become clearer whether all of this was actually true.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>314</sup> Schneider, 'A kingdom', p. 121. See also: Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', pp. 278–279. The briefs are edited in: *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, pp. 651–652, 782–786.

<sup>315</sup> Clement VIII to Anne, Queen of Scotland, 16 July 1602, in *CSP*, vol. XIII.ii, p. 1150. The letter is also edited in: Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', pp. 303–304.

<sup>316</sup> Clement VIII to Anne, Queen of Scotland, 16 July 1602, in *CSP*, vol. XIII.ii, p. 1150. See also: Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 281.

<sup>317</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 4 May 1603.

The pope clearly doubted the sincerity of Queen Anne's conversion up to 1603. As we have seen, he even alluded to these reservations in July 1602 in the brief for the queen consort. Yet, Clement VIII also decided to signal to Anne that he was willing to believe her assurances: in the brief of 16 July 1602, the pope wrote that he hoped that God would use her as a suitable instrument for converting her husband.<sup>318</sup> Less than a month later, on 9 August 1602, the pontiff sent two more briefs to Scotland.

The pope tasked Sir John Lindsay, a Scottish Catholic, with handing one brief to Queen Anne and another to King James to whom he also had to convey a message orally.<sup>319</sup> In November 1603 James VI/I informed his ambassador in Paris on the content of the oral message: Clement VIII had promised to oppose the claims of other pretenders and even to support the king's accession in England with a substantial financial subsidy. The price for the pope's assistance, however, was that the heir to the throne, Prince Henry Frederick (1594–1612), would receive a Catholic education.<sup>320</sup> Clement VIII was probably aware that if James VI wished to convert, he might not be able to do so openly without meeting resistance in England. The pontiff therefore also envisaged a long-term strategy: if he could oblige the Scottish monarchs to raise Prince Henry in the Catholic faith, he potentially would be able to return Scotland and – depending on the outcome of the English succession – England to Rome in the more distant future.

Clement VIII could simply look to the Lutheran kingdom of Sweden for an example where such a strategy of restoring Catholicism 'from above' had nearly worked (see also Part III). The opposition which Sigismund met from the Lutheran nobility in Sweden, however, should also have shown to the pope that restoring the Catholic faith in a commonwealth from the top down to the lower levels of the political and social hierarchy could cost a ruler his kingdom. Possibly, Clement VIII hoped that James VI's leniency towards his Catholic subjects would facilitate the spread of Catholicism in his dominions: this would have prepared the return of these dominions to the Catholic Church in the long-term, either under James's rule or that of his oldest son.

Obviously, the pope's delicate offer of supporting James in return for a Catholic upbringing of Prince Henry could not be recorded in writing. The two briefs for Anne and James VI therefore merely exhorted them to raise Prince Henry as a Catholic.<sup>321</sup> The briefs, however, also contained an innovation in epistolary ceremonial. In the salutation, the pope

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<sup>318</sup> Clement VIII to Anne, Queen of Scotland, 16 July 1602, in *CSP*, vol. XIII.ii, p. 1150.

<sup>319</sup> Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 282; Patterson, *Christendom*, pp. 39–40.

<sup>320</sup> James VI/I to Thomas Parry, [early Nov 1603], in Tierney (ed.), *Church*, vol. IV, pp. lxvi, lxix. See also: Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 282; Patterson, *Christendom*, p. 40.

<sup>321</sup> Clement VIII to James VI, 9 Aug 1602, in *CSP*, vol. XIII.ii, p. 1151; Clement VIII to Anne, Queen of Scotland, 9 Aug 1602, in *ibid.*, pp. 1151–1152.

now also bestowed an apostolic blessing on them, an epistolary practice which was traditionally reserved for Catholic recipients. As we have seen at the beginning of this subchapter, Clement VIII greeted James VI with the salutation 'Serenissimo rex salutem et apostolicam benedictionem et Deo pulsanti cordis ostium aperire'.<sup>322</sup> The queen was greeted by the pope with the formulation 'Serenissima regina salutem et apostolicam benedictionem et divini luminis perpetuum incrementum'.<sup>323</sup> To a modern reader, this may appear as a minor innovation of epistolary ceremonial only. Yet, its importance should not be underestimated.

The pope's decision to include an apostolic blessing in the greeting denotes that Clement VIII deemed that such a blessing would not offend the two monarchs, signifying his belief also that they truly inclined towards the Catholic faith. Alternatively, or rather additionally, the pontiff might have intended to send a sign of good will to James and Anne: the pope was signalling that he considered the professed disposition of the two monarchs towards the Catholic religion as true and that the king need not fear that the pope would oppose his succession in England.

Arguably, this special sign of the pope's good will on paper, together with the pope's exhortation that Prince Henry should be raised in the Catholic faith, also served to underline that the king could trust the offer presented on Clement's behalf by Lindsay: the king could believe that the pope really had offered financial support orally in return for raising Henry a Catholic. Yet it is also necessary to emphasise that Drummond may well have exaggerated when he related to James that the pope had offered him financial support. Drummond's assurances of Queen Anne's Catholic faith and her influence over the king might have prepared Clement VIII's decision to show himself more favourably to James VI than he had done previously. But the pope certainly based his decision on a more solid basis than on his faith in the two Scottish monarchs and on their show of propensity towards the Catholic religion.

Clement VIII realised that James VI would most likely become the next sovereign in England given his support from France: the defeat of Spain's armada in support of an Irish uprising in late 1601 and early 1602 had demonstrated to the pope that Spain, without the help of France, would not be able to install either a Spanish or an English Catholic claimant in England.<sup>324</sup> But why did the pope still indicate doubts about Anne's conversion on 16 July 1602, only to send two encouraging briefs to both princes in Scotland, merely three weeks later on 9 August? The pope's change of heart was probably motivated by a change

<sup>322</sup> Clement VIII to James VI, 9 Aug 1602, in *ibid.*, p. 1151.

<sup>323</sup> Clement VIII to Anne, Queen of Scotland, 9 Aug 1602, in *ibid.* See also: Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 305.

<sup>324</sup> Couzard, *Une ambassade*, pp. 84–85. See also: Allen, *Philip III*, pp. 72–76.

of heart of the part of Elizabeth I in late spring 1602.

On 10 May 1602, Ottavio Mirto Frangipani, the papal nuncio in Flanders, informed Cardinal Aldobrandini that the French ambassador in Brussels had news from his counterpart in England: Elizabeth I no longer refused to discuss her succession. Apparently, James VI was most likely to be chosen as her successor.<sup>325</sup> On 21 June Frangipani told the cardinal–nephew that he should use the presence of some English priests in Rome for receiving confirmation whether Elizabeth I now was really willing to review the English succession. Already one week later, on 28 June, Frangipani was able to confirm that the queen's council had been discussing the succession to the throne indeed and that none of the claimants had yet been nominated *expressis verbis*. James VI, however, apparently proceeded very prudently and enjoyed the best prospects.<sup>326</sup>

To Frangipani's letter of 21 June, Aldobrandini replied that the nuncio himself had to find out whether or not the queen truly no longer forbade mention of the topic of her succession. The English priests in Rome, the *appellants*, certainly provided the papacy with useful pieces of information but the veracity of their reports could not be trusted entirely. The cardinal sent this reply on 20 July.<sup>327</sup> This signifies that when the curia had issued the first brief for Anne on 16 July, the pope and Cardinal Aldobrandini had considered it only a rumour that Elizabeth I had now allowed the unresolved succession to be discussed. As we have seen, in this brief the pope still indicated that he was not yet convinced that Anne had converted. Shortly after this brief had been issued, Aldobrandini must have received Frangipani's missive of 28 June which confirmed the news that the queen's council had been discussing the succession and that James VI would almost certainly be declared king of England after Elizabeth I's death: the cardinal usually received and answered the nuncio's letters within three to four weeks. Most likely, the arrival of this confirmation induced the pope to decide that it was now time to show less intransigence and to demonstrate some good will towards King James. Consequently, merely three weeks after he had already replied to Queen Anne, Clement VIII sent two briefs to the queen consort and King James on 9 August and indicated that he believed their assurances of good will towards the Catholic religion.

Contrary to the pervasive opinion in historical scholarship, Clement VIII was not simply duped into trusting that King James would convert after his accession in England. The content as well as the epistolary ceremonial of the pope's briefs for James VI and Anne

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<sup>325</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.i, p. 320.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 324.

<sup>327</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 40, f. 93v: Aldobrandini to Frangipani, 20 July 1602. See also: *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, p. 683.

demonstrate that Clement VIII, a shrewd politician and diplomat, had reservations about the credibility of the hints from Scotland that the king intended to convert: up to July 1602, the pope was not even completely convinced that Anne had converted and in May 1603 he still expressed doubts about the sincerity of her conversion to Spain's ambassador in Rome. However, at the latest by August 1602, Clement VIII had also realised that Spain's military weakness, Henry IV's support for King James and in particular the inclination of Elizabeth I's ministers towards James all ultimately favoured his accession in England. The pope probably deemed that it was best to preserve the king's lenient attitude towards his Catholics subjects and to lay foundations for further contacts with the aim to convert the king some day. In August 1602, the pontiff therefore decided to signal to Queen Anne and James VI that he believed that they inclined to the Catholic faith and that he secretly approved of James's accession in England. In reality, Clement VIII also explored options to obstruct James VI's accession in favour of an undoubtedly orthodox Catholic up to Elizabeth I's death in 1603 (see Chapter 5.1.). Once King James secured the English crown for himself without any opposition, however, Clement VIII decided that the safest means to return England to the obedience of the Apostolic See would be to make James VI/I favour the English Catholics and to persuade him to convert.

#### **4.2. Signs of good will from the Holy See (1603)**

After Elizabeth I's death on 3 April 1603, the nuncios in Paris and Brussels both related that there was a general sense of astonishment that James had succeeded her peacefully and without any opposition in England.<sup>328</sup> Clearly, there were fewer Catholics in England who were willing to rise up against yet another Protestant on the throne than the English Catholics in exile had expected or had made Spain and the Holy See believe.<sup>329</sup> Thus, when Clement learnt of Elizabeth's death and of James VI/I's proclamation in England, Cardinal Aldobrandini informed the nuncios in Paris and Brussels in early May that the pope had decided that it was best to embrace the new situation in England and to work for the conversion of James VI/I or, at least, to make the king treat his Catholic subjects with benevolence.<sup>330</sup>

In summer 1603, Dr Robert Taylor, an informant of the archdukes and of the papal nuncio in Brussels, returned from a mission to England.<sup>331</sup> Based on observations which he

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<sup>328</sup> *Del Bufalo*, p. 450; *Frangipani*, vol. III.i, pp. 381 and 381 (footnote 1). See also: Schneider, 'A kingdom', pp. 132–133.

<sup>329</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.i, p. 381 (footnote 1).

<sup>330</sup> *Del Bufalo*, pp. 455, 463–464; *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, p. 693.

<sup>331</sup> For Taylor, see: *Frangipani*, vol. III.i, pp. LXXXIX, XCII–XCIII; *ibid.*, vol. III.ii, p. 410 (footnote 1).



had made in England, Taylor proposed to Frangipani that Clement VIII should send 'a person' to James VI/I with the task to congratulate the king upon his English accession. Taylor had spoken to some members of the Privy Council and all of them, even though they were all 'heretics', agreed that James would gladly receive somebody sent by the pope. Yet, Clement would have to send this person not as pope but as a temporal prince and, in order to avoid 'some popular tumult', the individual would have to be a layman rather than an ecclesiastic.<sup>332</sup> In early August Aldobrandini cautiously replied to the nuncio in Brussels that all of this had to be carefully considered and that he did not know how Clement VIII could send somebody to England as a temporal prince rather than as pope.<sup>333</sup> According to Spain's ambassador in Rome, Clement VIII regarded it as impossible to comply with this request: he deemed that although popes were temporal princes indeed, this was only a subsidiary role to the pontiffs' spiritual position as Vicars of Christ.<sup>334</sup> The pope, however, was not entirely opposed to the idea of charging an agent with a secret mission to England.

When a priest in England proposed that the pope should send an agent to James VI/I, the pontiff replied that he would consider doing so if the king agreed to receiving a papal envoy. In that case, the pope would furnish his agent with instructions to work for an improvement of the lot of the English Catholics.<sup>335</sup> Thus, although the pope responded reservedly to the notion that he should initiate contact with James VI/I, he was willing to task an agent with a secret mission to the new king to obtain benefits for Catholicism in England. For as long as the Protestant king did not clearly state that he would welcome a papal agent, however, the pope had to find other ways to work for the Catholic cause in England. This subchapter demonstrates that Clement intended to use formal diplomatic actors as 'informal' papal agents at James's court in order to circumvent the problem that there was no person in England who could speak to the king on his behalf. This subchapter also illuminates the papacy's efforts to assure James of the pope's good will via the English ambassador in Paris. But first, it analyses the degree to which the pope deemed that he could use James VI/I's Catholic wife as a potential ally in England.

Cynthia Fry has recently emphasised the importance of court women and queen consorts in early modern diplomacy. Arguing that their 'perceived influence', 'regardless of how much that perception was based on reality or yielded results, impacted how diplomacy was conducted, what plans were implemented, and what channels of communication and

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<sup>332</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, pp. 411–412; Hicks, 'The embassy ... Part II', pp. 194–196.

<sup>333</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, pp. 701–702.

<sup>334</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 12 Aug 1603.

<sup>335</sup> *Del Bufalo*, p. 534.

influence were employed'.<sup>336</sup> In the case of Anne's contact with the pope, as the instruction for Sir Edward Drummond in summer 1601 demonstrated, the queen consort tried to suggest that 'there was a chance of James's conversion' and that she 'had some influence over her husband's policies' (see Chapter 4.1.).<sup>337</sup> Clement VIII, however, was not entirely convinced that she would be able to exert sufficient influence over King James VI/I.

In late June 1603, the nuncio in Paris, Innocenzo del Bufalo (1566–1610), reported that a very important Catholic Scotsman had come to see him secretly. This Scottish nobleman informed him that the pope should try to maintain good relations with Anne because she would be a 'most powerful means among the king who loves her *fuor di modo*'.<sup>338</sup> Clement VIII, however, did not concur, and also doubted that James VI/I would convert soon.

In August 1603 the pope learnt that James had permitted or, according to a Spanish source even ordered, the reprinting of his *Confession*, the National Covenant of 1580. In the pontiff's opinion, James's *Confession* was 'full of a thousand blasphemies against the Catholic religion and the authority of the Holy See'. Moreover, it had come to Clement VIII's attention that 'the ministers closest to James VI/I and other heretics' were sowing distrust between James and Anne. Clement therefore feared that if the king found out that he was in contact with his wife, this could lead to counter-productive effects.<sup>339</sup> Spain's ambassador in Rome reported that Clement VIII deemed that James VI/I was a 'heretic' and that the door to his conversion was closed; Clement believed that the king could only be converted by the help of God and if the queen managed to gain more authority over her husband.<sup>340</sup> The pontiff nevertheless felt that he should at least encourage Anne and signal his high esteem for her.

Clement VIII decided that no efforts should be spared if they had the potential to benefit Catholicism in England: as a sign of his favour and as an encouragement, the pontiff decided to send a couple of rosaries, relics and images to Anne since he had heard that she would receive them with pleasure. James, however, learnt of these papal gifts in early 1604 and ordered Anne to return the devotional objects via Sir Thomas Parry (1544–1616), his ambassador in Paris, who had to send them to the nuncio in France.<sup>341</sup> The French king explained to the nuncio that it was a 'good sign' that James VI/I had made

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<sup>336</sup> Fry, 'Catholic diplomacy', p. 284.

<sup>337</sup> Ibid., pp. 276–277.

<sup>338</sup> Del Bufalo, p. 490.

<sup>339</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 12 Aug 1603. For the copy of James VI/I's *Confession*, see: AGS, *Estado*, 840, f. 225: 'Copia de la confesion del Rey de Inglatt(terr)a'.

<sup>340</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 12 Aug 1603.

<sup>341</sup> Del Bufalo, pp. 534, 722, 722 (footnote 1). See also: Patterson, *Christendom*, pp. 42–43; Hicks, 'The embassy ... Part III', pp. 163–165; Hicks, 'The embassy ... Part IV', pp. 50–56.

Anne return the pope's gifts: after all, contrary to the standard practice of 'heretics', the English king had not allowed 'that these devotional objects would be trampled'.<sup>342</sup> Thus, the French king presented James VI/I's seemingly unfriendly reaction as a mark of respect for the pope. In the meantime, however, Clement VIII had received further negative news about Queen Anne's influence on the king.

On 7 November 1603, the papal nuncio in Brussels, Frangipani, wrote a long letter in which he informed Cardinal Aldobrandini of James's attitude towards his Catholic subjects. According to Frangipani, there were many positive signs. For example, James VI/I employed Catholics in the royal household, sent them on embassies abroad and prohibited the prosecution of Catholics for religious reasons. On the downside, however, one Protestant member of the king's Privy Council, Sir Robert Cecil (1563–1612), had been able to gain such a degree of influence over James VI/I that 'the king listened with the ears of Cecil, spoke with the tongue of Cecil and decided with the judgment of Cecil'.<sup>343</sup> Such criticism of Cecil's influence at the English court was not new: already during Elizabeth I's reign, English contemporaries had criticised the *quasi*-regal sway of Cecil and his father, William Cecil (1520/1521–1598). As the principal orchestrator of James's proclamation in England, Cecil had laid the basis for preserving his influential position at the English court.<sup>344</sup> In his letter, Frangipani provided an explanation of how Cecil had managed to increase his influence on the new king even further.

The nuncio wrote that Cecil had already cultivated good relations with James prior to Elizabeth I's death and made James hate and suspect those people in his entourage who had been serving the king loyally, many of whom were Catholics. Cecil, Frangipani continued, had also realised that Queen Anne was Catholic and that the king loved her. Cecil therefore tried to deprive the queen of her influence over James VI/I by tempting him with love affairs but without success. Subsequently, however, Cecil managed to convince the king that it would be better if Queen Anne was freed from being molested by petitioners and the king, in turn, liberated from requests by his wife. Thus, Frangipani related, Cecil persuaded James VI/I to forbid the queen consort to receive petitions and to interfere in matters of state. Moreover, the nuncio continued, Robert Cecil had furnished the king with such a workload that James VI/I became weary of dealing with state matters; at the same time, Cecil told the monarch that it was below the dignity of a king to work this hard and at the expense of his royal pleasures. Cecil then simply had to offer his services to the king and to

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<sup>342</sup> *Del Bufalo*, p. 731.

<sup>343</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, pp. 441–442 (quotation p. 442). For Cecil's religious views, see: Pauline Croft, 'The religion of Robert Cecil', *The Historical Journal*, 34 (1991), pp. 773–796.

<sup>344</sup> Pauline Croft, 'The reputation of Robert Cecil: libels, political opinion and popular awareness in the early seventeenth century', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, 1 (1991), pp. 46–48.

take care of all affairs of state. As a result of Cecil's machinations, Frangipani concluded, the current state of affairs in England could be aptly summarised in these few words: 'the king hunts, the queen dances, Cecil rules'.<sup>345</sup>

Frangipani's report must have confirmed Clement VIII in his opinion that one of his potentially best allies in England, Anne, was not able to exert as much influence on her husband as he would have wished. Clement VIII, however, did not only rely on Anne as a means to work for an improvement of the Catholic cause in England. In order to increase the pressure on King James VI/I so that he would eventually favour his Catholic subjects and convert, Clement intended to use the ambassadors of other Catholic princes as his 'informal' agents.

The news of James's proclamation as king of England had barely reached Rome, when, on 20 April 1603, Cardinal Aldobrandini instructed the nuncio in Paris to request that Henry IV recommend the English Catholics to James.<sup>346</sup> Moreover, at the end of May, Clement VIII sent a brief to Brussels because he had learnt that Archduke Albert intended to task the count of Arenberg, Charles de Ligne (1550–1616), with an embassy to England. The pope wished that the archduke's ambassador be instructed to work for a better treatment of the English Catholics. If possible, he should even try to induce James VI/I to convert.<sup>347</sup>

When in early June 1603 Duke Charles III of Lorraine (1543–1608) resolved to send a representative to James VI/I, Clement VIII likewise asked him to recommend the English Catholics and the Catholic faith to King James.<sup>348</sup> This was a promising channel since James VI/I greatly respected Duke Charles III, to whom he was related via his grandmother, Mary of Guise (1515–1560).<sup>349</sup> Clement VIII similarly wrote to the doge of Venice, Marino Grimani (r. 1595–1605), that he hoped that something could be achieved for the Catholic cause in England by the means of his ambassador.<sup>350</sup>

As we have seen, in August 1603, the re-publication of King James's *Confession* convinced the pope that James VI/I was truly a 'heretic' and that he would not convert soon. Nevertheless, Clement did not give up entirely. On 23 August, he asked King Sigismund III of Poland and Sweden to work for the lifting of the laws against the Catholics in England. The pope also alluded to his hope that James VI/I could be convinced to convert at some

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<sup>345</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, pp. 442–444 (quotation on p. 444).

<sup>346</sup> *Del Bufalo*, p. 455.

<sup>347</sup> ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 47, ff. 171r–172r (no. 145): Clement VIII to Archduke Albert, 31 May 1603. See also: *Frangipani*, vol. III.ii, p. 695; Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 285.

<sup>348</sup> ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 47, ff. 173v–175r (no. 147): Clement VIII to Charles III of Lorraine, 6 June 1603. See also: Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 285.

<sup>349</sup> *Del Bufalo*, pp. 91–92.

<sup>350</sup> ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 47, f. 176r–v (no. 148): Clement VIII to Marino Grimani, 7 June 1603.

point in the future: Clement VIII desired that, by the help of his ambassador, Sigismund III would be able to plant the seed for the king's conversion which, one day, might bear fruit. In late November, the pontiff expressed the same wish to Emperor Rudolf II.<sup>351</sup> The pope thus tried to use the existing diplomatic contacts and the friendship of Catholic princes with James for exerting influence on the king by indirect means since there existed no formal diplomatic relations between Rome and the English court and since James had not indicated that he would receive and listen to a secret papal agent if Clement VIII resolved to send one. The pope's recourse to the help of ambassadors of other princes, however, made Clement VIII entirely dependent on the intentions of third parties. The nomination of the French ambassador extraordinary to England illustrates this plainly.

In April 1603, Henry IV charged the baron of Rosny, Maximilien de Béthune (1560–1641), to congratulate James on his English accession.<sup>352</sup> Thus, the French king, himself a convert, sent a Huguenot on a mission to James VI/I. Henry IV tried to assure the nuncio in Paris, Del Bufalo, that he had instructed Rosny to work for the liberty of conscience for the English Catholics. Still, the nuncio could not refrain from complaining that it was scandalous and impossible to rely on a 'heretic' as a promoter of the Catholic religion.<sup>353</sup> Without Henry IV's knowledge, Del Bufalo managed to introduce an informant, Giovanni degli Effetti, in Rosny's following.<sup>354</sup> In July, Degli Effetti reported that Rosny had recommended the English Catholics to King James indeed, as Henry IV had tasked him to do at Clement VIII's request. Apparently, James VI/I replied that he did not intend to prosecute his Catholic subjects but wanted them to pay fines instead.<sup>355</sup>

Despite Rosny's recommendation of the English Catholics to James VI/I, this example demonstrates that the pope's reliance on representatives of other princes for exerting influence on King James had clear limits. Clement VIII did not have any control over the appointment and mission of the ambassadors whom he hoped to use as 'his' agents for the Catholic cause. Moreover, he could not expect that all Catholic princes and their ambassadors would help him to the same degree and with the same conviction. Equally, the loyalty and obedience of the pope's 'informal' agents in England ultimately lay with their sovereigns who had their own political objectives which they certainly did not want to risk by annoying James VI/I with exhortations to treat his Catholic subjects benignly and to

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<sup>351</sup> ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 34, ff. 154v–156r (no. 96): Clement VIII to Sigismund III of Poland and Sweden, 23 Aug 1603; ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 56, ff. 28r–29r (no. 30): Clement VIII to Rudolf II, 25 Nov 1603; Meyer, 'Clemens VIII.', p. 286.

<sup>352</sup> *Del Bufalo*, p. 455.

<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 459.

<sup>354</sup> Barbiche, *Bulla*, pp. 492, 499; *Del Bufalo*, pp. 22–23.

<sup>355</sup> TNA, *P.R.O.*, 31/9/87, f. 58: Giovanni degli Effetti to Del Bufalo, 10 July 1603.

convert. In addition to the ambassadors of Catholic princes, the pope also tried to use the representative of a Protestant monarch for its objective to win James VI/I for the Catholic religion: an ambassador of King James himself.

In August 1603, Clement VIII approved of the informal relations which Nuncio Del Bufalo had established with the English ambassador in Paris, Sir Thomas Parry.<sup>356</sup> These contacts, however, had to remain secret: a nuncio could not officially converse with the representative of a 'heretical' ruler.<sup>357</sup> As explained, direct contact between the official diplomatic representatives of the pope and of a Protestant ruler would have implied that the Holy See recognised a Protestant prince as a sovereign even though, by his adherence to heresy, such a Protestant prince had automatically incurred the major excommunication and thus also had forfeited his right to fulfil a public office as a sovereign prince. Consequently, the English ambassador and Del Bufalo only maintained indirect contact by the means of intermediaries.<sup>358</sup> These indirect relations between Parry and Del Bufalo signified that the papacy had another means for engaging informally with James and for assuring him of the pope's good will.

On 21 July 1603, Nuncio Del Bufalo informed the Holy See that he had learnt the principal argument which James VI/I employed against those who tried to recommend the English Catholics to him: James usually retorted that his Catholic subjects had to obey the pope if they wanted to live as true Catholics and, consequently, they had to disobey him, James VI/I.<sup>359</sup> Upon reading this, Clement VIII wrote in the margin of the nuncio's letter that, on the contrary, 'heresy ... induces disobedience. The Catholic religion teaches and defends obedience to princes'.<sup>360</sup> The pope's remark expressed an argument which, according to Eckehart Stöve, had become a 'classical counter-reformatory topos' by the late sixteenth century: because the Catholic Church insisted on religious-ecclesiastical obedience it also induced adherents of the Catholic faith to political obedience.<sup>361</sup>

In response, the pope ordered the nuncio to inform James that he had no cause to fear the Catholic religion. On the contrary, the king should learn that Clement VIII longed and worked for the wellbeing and quietude of James VI/I and of his kingdoms.<sup>362</sup> The pope's wish that James VI/I and his dominions remained at peace followed the logic which

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<sup>356</sup> Ibid., f. 306: Aldobrandini to Del Bufalo, 11 Aug 1603. French summary in: *Del Bufalo*, p. 534. For these secret contacts in more detail, see: Barbiche, *Bulla*, pp. 495–499.

<sup>357</sup> Barbiche, *Bulla*, p. 497.

<sup>358</sup> Ibid.

<sup>359</sup> *Del Bufalo*, p. 505.

<sup>360</sup> TNA, *P.R.O.*, 31/9/87, f. 90: Del Bufalo to Aldobrandini, 21 July 1603 (marginal note in the hand of the pope). Clement VIII's remark is omitted in: *Del Bufalo*, p. 505.

<sup>361</sup> Stöve, 'Häresiebekämpfung', p. 61.

<sup>362</sup> TNA, *P.R.O.*, 31/9/87, f. 90: Del Bufalo to Aldobrandini, 21 July 1603 (marginal note in the hand of the pope).

Eckehart Stöve had detected in Clement VIII's general instructions for the nuncios: the pontiff hoped that the 'quiete publica' would ultimately also favour the Catholic cause.<sup>363</sup> The difference in this case was that now the pope did not apply this policy to a Catholic or religiously divided commonwealth but to a kingdom ruled by a Protestant prince. At the end of September 1603, the nuncio in Paris complied with the pope's request.

In a letter to Aldobrandini, Del Bufalo explained that ever since James VI/I had ascended to the English throne, he had endeavoured to let the king know that Clement VIII thought of him with 'good will and love'. Now the nuncio had resolved to attempt the same by writing to James. Therefore, he had decided to send a letter to the king via the English ambassador in Paris, in the hope that this would serve 'as an antidote' to the constant efforts of the 'heretics' who tried to irritate the king against the pope.<sup>364</sup>

In his letter to James VI/I, Del Bufalo emphasised that Clement VIII had always refused to deploy ecclesiastical censures against him and had rejected countless schemes to cause tumults in England.<sup>365</sup> The nuncio also stressed that Clement had exhorted Philip III, Henry IV and other Catholic princes to maintain peace and good understanding with James VI/I (see also below in Chapter 5.2.). The pope hoped that such peaceful relations would lead to a true and sincere peace in Christendom. The nuncio further emphasised that the pope wished that 'all Christian princes' could rule and prosper in their kingdoms without any disturbance. Del Bufalo added that he was sure that the king was well aware of Clement VIII's desire for peace in Christendom. After all, the pope had proved his wish for peace several times, for example 'in France, Savoy and in many other places' where the pope had tried to 'extinguish the fire' which trouble-makers had started.<sup>366</sup>

Thus, the aim of Del Bufalo's letter was to convince King James VI/I of Clement VIII's friendly disposition and that he did not need to fear any censures or intrigues emanating from Rome. On the contrary, Clement VIII was a peace-loving prince who wished to prevent tumults and to preserve Christian rulers in their kingdoms. Interestingly, Del Bufalo invoked past successes of Clement as a peacemaker as a proof of the pope's dedication to peace: the nuncio's references to the examples in France and Savoy were clear allusions to the peace treaties of Vervins (1598) and Lyons (1601) which had been negotiated under papal auspices. As we have seen, Clement VIII had insisted on excluding envoys of Protestant powers, such as England, from the peace negotiations between France

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<sup>363</sup> Stöve, 'Häresiebekämpfung', p. 59.

<sup>364</sup> *Del Bufalo*, p. 568.

<sup>365</sup> TNA, *P.R.O.*, 31/9/87, f. 201: Del Bufalo to James VI/I, 29 Sept 1603. A translation of the letter into English is published in: Giuseppi (ed.), *Calendar*, vol. XV, pp. 249–250. For the pope's rejection of tumults, see for example: *Del Bufalo*, pp. 506–507, 553.

<sup>366</sup> TNA, *P.R.O.*, 31/9/87, ff. 201–203: Del Bufalo to James VI/I, 29 Sept 1603.

and Spain in Vervins but, for obvious reasons, Del Bufalo glossed over this fact.

It is also noteworthy that Del Bufalo suggested that the Protestant addressee was comprised in the pope's care for Christian rulers. As we have seen, in papal briefs, the form of salutation for Protestant princes was similar to the forms used for Muslim and Orthodox rulers, in clear differentiation to the greeting for a Catholic ruler: the papal curia thus expressed in epistolary practice that Protestant rulers did not belong to the *respublica christiana* (see Chapter 4.1.). As explained, in briefs issued in August 1602, the pope used a hybrid form of salutation which contained an apostolic benediction for King James VI and Queen Anne but which otherwise still treated them like princes outside the Christian community. In September 1603, the Holy See still considered the king of England a 'heretic' but Nuncio Del Bufalo implied in his letter that James VI/I was one of the Christian princes whom the pope wished to prosper in his kingdom. Del Bufalo thus suggested that King James VI/I and his dominions were included in Clement VIII's concern for the wellbeing and peace of the *respublica christiana* and emphasised the pope's good will for the king: after all, since he had been baptised a Catholic, James arguably still belonged to the Catholic Church despite his adherence to heresy. Clearly, there was room for flexibility in the papal dichotomy of 'inside' and 'outside' of the *respublica christiana* in informal papal diplomatic practice if the Holy See could expect advantages for the Catholic cause from such a demonstration of flexibility and good will.<sup>367</sup>

In November 1603, Clement VIII approved Del Bufalo's decision to send a letter to James via the English embassy in Paris.<sup>368</sup> In early November 1603, James VI/I replied to Del Bufalo in a letter which he formally addressed to the English ambassador in Paris but which, in reality, was destined for the nuncio. In this letter, the king expressed his high esteem for Clement VIII and thanked the pope for the kindness which he had shown to him so far. Moreover, the king emphasised that he was firm in his own faith but also expressed his wish that a general council would remove the religious differences in Christendom and restore it to unity.<sup>369</sup>

In late December 1603, in response to James VI/I's letter, Cardinal Aldobrandini re-affirmed to the nuncio that Clement VIII 'had always loved [King James] with particular inclination', before and after his accession in England, an assurance which the letter repeated several times. The cardinal also underlined the pope's care for James VI/I's salvation and for the peace of his kingdoms. If there was any Catholic who caused

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<sup>367</sup> For a similar observation see: Stöve, 'Häresiebekämpfung', p. 65 (footnote 35).

<sup>368</sup> Del Bufalo, p. 598.

<sup>369</sup> Ibid., p. 96. For James VI/I's letter for Del Bufalo, see also Chapter 4.1. For James VI/I's call for a general council, see also: Patterson, *Christendom*, pp. 40–42, 56–57, 69.



problems to the king, the pope wanted to know his 'name and where he is' and the pontiff would take care of the problem. Clement VIII, however, also wished the king to favour the Catholics in his kingdom as a sign of his good intentions. Towards the end, the letter explained at length that the pope did not deem the convocation of a council necessary because all the previous ones had already confirmed the truth of the Catholic religion. Instead he hoped that the king's wish for a general assembly of the Church would be the first step towards his conversion since Henry had also asked for a council before he converted.<sup>370</sup>

At first sight, the tone of Aldobrandini's letter was surprisingly positive. After all, James had confirmed his intention to stay Protestant in his letter for Del Bufalo and his wish for a general council was, from the papacy's point of view, an impossibility. There is, however, a simple explanation for Aldobrandini's friendly tone: in mid-December, the nuncio had warned Cardinal Aldobrandini that he would show his letters relating to English affairs to Sir Thomas Parry, the English ambassador in Paris, in order to win his trust.<sup>371</sup> Aldobrandini's letter therefore should be read as an attempt to convince Parry and King James VI/I of the pope's good disposition towards the king. Clearly, the pope kept hoping that James VI/I's conversion could be obtained one day but was also aware that the king first needed to be persuaded that the pope and his spiritual authority did not pose any threat to him. This was still Clement VIII's conviction one year later, as the instruction for Del Bufalo's successor in Paris, Maffeo Barberini (the later Pope Urban VIII), demonstrates.

In December 1604, the papal instruction summarised that the pope had requested the Catholic princes to work in favour of the Catholic cause in England by means of their ambassadors. Some of the ambassadors, the instruction explained, did not believe that the time was yet ripe to discuss religion with the king. Others, however, addressed James VI/I on the topic and they deemed that the king was well disposed towards his Catholic subjects. These ambassadors even believed that James VI/I could be won for the Catholic faith if he was treated with kindness. According to the instruction, Clement VIII concurred with this opinion. The pope had exhorted the English Catholics to remain quiet and had asked trouble-makers either to compose themselves or to emigrate. The pope's aim was to make James VI/I understand that, rather than causing him trouble, the pontiff wished to preserve him as king of England and, if possible, to obtain the salvation of his soul.<sup>372</sup>

Furthermore, the instruction informed Barberini that Del Bufalo and the English ambassador in Paris had maintained 'some friendship'. Without causing any scandal,

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<sup>370</sup> *Del Bufalo*, pp. 637–639.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 622.

<sup>372</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, p. 744.

Barberini had to retain these friendly relations and to convince Parry and King James that the pope only wished the best for the king and that he would never work for anything else than the salvation of James VI/I's soul. Clement expected that this would allow the new nuncio to make King James stop worrying about matters of state – presumably the instruction was referring to Catholic uprisings – and thus open up the possibility for further negotiations. By doing so, the pontiff hoped, Barberini might even acquire the glory of initiating the return of James VI/I and his kingdom to the obedience of the Apostolic See.<sup>373</sup>

We have seen in the previous subchapter that Clement VIII responded carefully to hints from Scotland that James VI might convert. After James's accession in England, Clement thought that the moment of truth had arrived and hoped that words would now be followed by deeds. The pontiff tried to encourage the king to treat his Catholic subjects with kindness and to convert but he could not exert influence on James VI/I directly since the Stuart king did not wish to receive any papal agent and since the pope would only establish formal diplomatic contact with the king after his return to the fold of the Catholic Church. Instead, the pope tried to use existing friendships and diplomatic contacts between James VI/I and Catholic princes in the service of the Holy See and of the Catholic religion.

At the latest by mid-August 1603, the pope had again lost some of his earlier expectations that James might convert. The pope kept hoping that the king would change his religious allegiance one day but deemed that this could only be achieved if Anne managed to gain more influence over her husband and only if James had no reasons to resent or fear his Catholic subjects. Nevertheless, Clement VIII hoped that demonstrations of his good intentions for the king and exhortations to the English Catholics to submit themselves to their sovereign could induce James VI/I to treat his Catholic subjects benignly.<sup>374</sup> The secret contacts between the nuncio and the English ambassador in Paris were one means in particular which allowed the Holy See to assure King James that the pope had only the best intentions for the English monarch. The image of Clement VIII which Nuncio Del Bufalo tried to convey to James VI/I was not that of a confessional enemy but of a supreme pontiff who, as he had proved in the past, did not desire anything else than peace and tranquillity in Christendom, even for the Protestant king of England and Scotland.

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<sup>373</sup> Ibid., pp. 744–745.

<sup>374</sup> Barbiche, *Bulla*, p. 483.

The pope responded cautiously to the hints of James VI and Anne at the king's possible conversion. Although Anne was a secret Catholic, Clement VIII was not entirely convinced that she had converted when he sent her a brief in mid-July 1602. In August 1602, however, presumably because the pope realised that James VI was likely to be nominated Elizabeth I's successor, Clement indicated his support for him. Probably as a sign of his good will and intentions, the pope even bestowed an apostolic blessing on the two monarchs in his briefs of August 1602. The pope thus showed himself less intransigent than he had in the past and probably hoped to encourage a further rapprochement between James VI and the Holy See. Clement VIII suspected that the signs of good will from Scotland might be 'some artifice' to deceive him. Still, the pope also considered that it was necessary to preserve James VI's alleged good disposition towards the Catholics and their religion in case that the king of Scotland managed to obtain the English crown unopposed. Evidently, Clement believed that King James VI might be induced to convert but contrary to prevalent historiography, the pontiff did not simply trust in the king's conversion: as the next chapter will show, the pope was not led into diplomatic passivity by mere assurances that the king would convert after his potential accession in England.

Although the pope would have considered to send an agent on a secret papal mission to the court in London, he could not do so for as long as James VI/I was not willing or, out of religio-political concerns, unable to receive and listen to such an agent from Rome. Therefore, after King James VI/I's accession in England, Clement VIII tried to encourage Anne to work for James's conversion and hoped to use the representatives of Catholic princes as agents of the Holy See in England. The secret contacts between the nuncio and the English ambassador in Paris allowed the Holy See to assure King James VI/I of the pope's good will and to persuade him that he should embrace rather than fear the Catholic Church.

Clement VIII aimed to restore Catholicism in England and thus his policy was motivated by confessional concerns. The pope, however, followed a pragmatic policy which deviated from the course of religio-political intransigence which most of his predecessors had followed and which the Holy Office had managed to impose on papal policy and diplomacy in the second half of the sixteenth century. Ultimately, Clement VIII's efforts were in vain. Paul V continued the attempts of the Aldobrandini pontiff to convince James VI/I of the pope's 'paternal affection' for the king and particularly emphasised that, prior to his election as pontiff, he had been the vice-protector of England

and Scotland in Rome. Following the 1605 gunpowder plot, James requested all his subjects to profess their undivided loyalty to him in the Oath of Allegiance in June 1606, threatening those who denied to take the oath with imprisonment, and increased the persecution of English priests.<sup>375</sup> The Oath of Allegiance rejected the papacy's claim to possess the authority to depose sovereigns, was censured by the Borghese pope on 22 September 1606 and led to the 'war of words between James I and the Catholic Church' in which Bellarmine and Suárez defended the pope's right to intervene in the temporal sphere when matters of faith were concerned.<sup>376</sup>

During the reign of Charles I (r. 1625–1649) relations between Rome and the English court improved to such a degree that, in the 1630s, Urban VIII sent three papal agents on unofficial diplomatic missions to England. On the eve of the English Civil Wars (1642–1651), however, Charles's opponents used the presence of a papal agent in London against the king and in June 1641 the pope's unofficial representative was forced to leave England. The accession of the Catholic James II (r. 1685–1688) allowed the papacy to establish formal diplomatic contact with the English court but Nuncio Ferdinando d'Adda (1650–1719) was compelled to depart again after the outbreak of the Revolution of 1688.<sup>377</sup> Thus, when circumstances in England allowed for it, Clement VIII's successors continued his pragmatic policy, also demonstrated benevolence towards the Protestant kings of England and even tried to return the Anglican to the Roman Catholic Church by means of unofficial missions but they also would only establish formal diplomatic contact with an English king if he openly adhered to the Catholic faith.

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<sup>375</sup> Ibid., pp. 500, 506.

<sup>376</sup> Villani, 'Britain', p. 308.

<sup>377</sup> Ibid., pp. 312–317, 320.

## Clement VIII, Spain and England (1595–1604)

During a meeting of the Spanish Council of State on 21 April 1603, the constable of Castile, Juan Fernández de Velasco (c. 1550–1613), the very man who later signed the Treaty of London (1604) between Spain and England in Philip III's name, voiced an extraordinary piece of advice.<sup>378</sup> In a discussion arising from James VI's proclamation as King James I of England, the constable recommended that the ambassador in Rome should discern the pope's inclination in affairs relating to James VI/I's accession: if he found the pontiff 'disposed to procure peace' and if the proposal came from the pope, then the duke of Sessa should not reject the idea prematurely. The ambassador would have to point out to Clement VIII that this would be 'a work which was very worthy of His Holiness' and which would 'help the Catholics of England'.<sup>379</sup>

Thus, not even ninety years after the outbreak of the Reformation, the constable of Castile thought that, potentially, the pope would agree to make peace between a Catholic and a Protestant ruler. Velasco deemed that, rather than conflicting with the pope's dignity, it would be worthy of him to reconcile a Catholic with a 'heretical' prince. Chapter 3 has shown that after the conclusion of the Franco-Spanish peace, there were rumours at the papal court that Clement VIII would try to make peace between Elizabeth I and Philip II in order to free Spain's forces for the anti-Ottoman war. Now, in 1603, one of Philip III's advisers thought that the head of the Church would intervene for peace in order to improve the situation of the Catholic cause in England.

So far this thesis has demonstrated that Clement refused to reconcile Protestant and

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<sup>378</sup> For Spain's response to James VI/I's accession and the events which led to the conclusion of the Peace of London, see: Allen, *Philip III*, pp. 106–137; Thewlis, *Peace*, pp. 185–225; Sanz Camaño, 'España', pp. 123–128. For the archdukes' perspective, see: Duerloo, *Dynasty*, pp. 166–176; Joseph Cuvelier, 'Les préliminaires du traité de Londres (29 août 1604)', *Revue belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 2 (1923), pp. 279–304 and 485–508. For an English perspective on the peace, see: Croft, 'Rex Pacificus', pp. 140–154; Pauline Croft, 'Brussels and London: the archdukes, Robert Cecil and James I', in Werner Thomas and Luc Duerloo (eds.), *Albert and Isabella (1598–1621)* (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 79–85. For the constable's role in the peace negotiations, see: Loomie, 'Toleration', *passim*.

<sup>379</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 840, f. 211: consulta, 21 April 1603.

Catholic powers during the papal peace negotiations in Vervins. Still, the pope also was not opposed to peace talks between the Spanish Habsburgs and Elizabeth I in 1600 since they were not directed in the pope's name. Clement clearly did not insist that Catholic rulers had the duty to wage a religious war against 'heretics', not even against an excommunicated 'heretical' ruler. He did, however, maintain that peace with Elizabeth I absolutely had to benefit Catholicism in England directly by the introduction of religious concessions for English Catholics in a potential peace treaty. The interest of religion therefore had to take precedence over a ruler's political interests to make peace. This chapter investigates whether Clement also insisted that the Spanish Habsburgs had to obtain religious concessions in peace negotiations with Elizabeth's successor: James VI/I.

The previous chapter highlighted that Clement distrusted James VI's hints at a potential conversion but after his accession to the English throne in 1603, Clement VIII tried to exhort James to favour the English Catholics and to persuade him to convert. This chapter argues that Clement's strategies to return England to the obedience of the Apostolic See caused dissatisfaction among the Spanish. It also reveals that the Spanish were concerned that the pope followed a 'bad' reason of state in his international religio-political policies and that the head of the Catholic Church thus prioritised his own political interests over the interests of Catholicism. Moreover, it shows that the Spanish were equally concerned to emphasise that Spain itself never had and never would follow any such 'bad' reason of state in its international policies and that if it made peace with a 'heretic', then it would be in the interest of religion rather than out of political considerations or military weakness.

The first subchapter discusses how Clement VIII explored alternatives to James VI's accession in England and situates the pope's diplomatic activities within the context of Spain's hegemony in Christendom. The second subchapter examines discussions in the Spanish Council of State as to whether Philip III should continue war or make peace with England after Elizabeth I's death and how Clement responded to James VI/I's accession to the English throne. It will shed light on the degree to which the Spanish Council of State deemed that it would be necessary to take the pontiff's opinion about peace with a 'heretic' into account and also on the pope's attitude towards a potential Anglo-Spanish peace. The last subchapter analyses Spain's response to Clement VIII's England policy.

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that the accession of King James VI/I influenced the pope's attitude towards peace between the Spanish Habsburgs and the new English king as well as to contrast the strategies of Spain and Rome in their attempts to work for the Catholic cause in England. More widely, the chapter will enhance our

understanding of Clement VIII's interpretation of his role as the head of the Catholic Church and as the spiritual leader of the religiously divided *respublica christiana*: it shows that there were circumstances in which an early modern pope considered actively promoting peace between Catholic and Protestant sovereigns.

### **5.1. Clement VIII, Spain and the English succession crisis (1595–1603)**

In January 1596, the Spanish ambassador in Rome, the duke of Sessa, expressed his concern that Clement VIII probably shared the opinion of Sixtus V (r. 1585–1590) that 'the Spanish were certainly Catholics but they did not want that there were any other Christians in the world than themselves'.<sup>380</sup> In Sessa's remark resonates the disappointment that Clement seemed to misinterpret the zeal with which the Spanish king tried to work for the interest of Catholicism as undue ambition to subject the rest of Christendom to Spanish rule. Sessa thus implied that the pope suspected that the Spanish king used religion for masking a policy which pursued purely political interests and thus followed a 'bad' interest of state which employed religion for political goals.

We have seen in the introduction to the previous chapter that Philip II and Philip III desired to bring England within the sphere of Spain's influence by obtaining the English crown for Isabella Clara Eugenia. We have also seen that King James's assurances of good will and his inclination towards the Catholic religion did kindle some hope in Clement VIII that he would convert but, overall, the pope's response to the hints from Scotland was careful and prudent (Chapter 4.1.). This subchapter shows that the Spanish ambassador in Rome feared that, in the affairs relating to the English succession, the head of the Roman Catholic Church intended to follow a 'bad' reason of state which served the pope's political interests rather than the Catholic cause and which was directed against Spain's hegemony in Christendom. This suspicion originated in Clement VIII's absolution of Henry of Navarre which, in Spain's eyes, had confirmed that the Aldobrandini pope harboured anti-Spanish feelings.

After Sixtus V's death in 1590, Philip II only approved of Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini as a candidate for the papal throne after two more popes had died in quick succession.<sup>381</sup> Silvestro Aldobrandini (1499–1558), the father of Clement VIII, had been a secretary of the Cardinal–Nephew Carlo Carafa (1517/1519–1561) and an ardent promoter of the war of Paul IV Carafa against the Habsburgs. The Spanish king therefore deemed that Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini possibly shared some of his father's anti-Spanish

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<sup>380</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 967, f. 35: Sessa to Philip II, 30 Jan 1596.

<sup>381</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 957, no f.: 'Mem(ori)a de la promessa q(ue) el Card(ena)l Montalto à hecho antes de entrar en el conclave', 26 Oct 1591.

feelings.<sup>382</sup>

After his election in 1592, Clement VIII initially showed himself ready to act in unison with Spain in his French policy. Yet, soon after the conversion of Henry of Navarre in 1593, Clement VIII decided to absolve the Bourbon prince against the will of the Spanish king in 1595.<sup>383</sup> Clement thus undermined the religious legitimization of Philip II's war in France and frustrated the king's attempts to obtain the French crown for his daughter, the Infanta Isabella.<sup>384</sup> Clement VIII consciously worked towards the re-establishment of the balance of power between Spain and France in Christendom in the long-term when he absolved Henry of Navarre and thus tried to curb Spain's influence at the Holy See and on the Italian peninsula.<sup>385</sup> as mentioned in Chapter 2, after France had been compelled to renounce its claims to Milan and Naples in the Peace Treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis (1559) and after the French kings had to turn their main attention to the internal wars in France, Spain's influence in Italy had increased to new levels.

This subchapter demonstrates that Clement VIII's attitude towards the English succession crisis was bound to nourish Spain's concern that the pontiff was trying to undermine its dominant position in Christendom further. It shows that the Spanish feared that Clement VIII intended to prioritise his interests as a temporal ruler over his religious duties as the head of the Catholic Church. This section also examines how the pontiff tried to balance his seemingly conflicting roles as the head of Christendom, of the Papal States and of the Aldobrandini family. This subchapter thus provides insights into Clement VIII's interpretation of his various roles as pope and how the Spanish thought the pontiff would interpret these roles.

In October 1595, Philip II sent a warning to Rome that James VI might feign his conversion just like Henry IV. According to Philip II, Henry was not yet satisfied with the effects of his fake conversion. Now the French king intended to incite others to imitate the bad precedent which he had set for them and wished them to deceive the Holy See as well.<sup>386</sup> Sessa, however, feared that the pope would welcome overtures from James VI. At the end of January 1596, the ambassador deemed that it was the common opinion at the papal court that, for the universal good of Christendom, it was best to 'treat heretical princes with suavity rather than to make them despair'.<sup>387</sup>

Obviously, Sessa's remark reflected his dissatisfaction that, four months earlier,

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<sup>382</sup> Elena Fasano Guarini, 'Aldobrandini, Silvestro', *DBI*, 2 (1960), p. 113; Pattenden, 'Rome', p. 76.

<sup>383</sup> Borromeo, 'Istruzioni', pp. 120–121.

<sup>384</sup> Loomie, 'Stuart Succession', p. 492.

<sup>385</sup> Borromeo, 'Istruzioni', p. 121.

<sup>386</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 967, f. 13: Philip II to Sessa, 26 Oct 1595.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 35: Sessa to Philip II, 30 Jan 1596.



Clement VIII had absolved Henry IV against Spain's will. Presumably, Sessa's remark was also a comment on the influence of the Oratorians on Clement VIII and its effects on the religio-political climate at the curia (see Chapter 2). In any case, Sessa clearly suspected that Clement VIII intended to re-employ his leniency towards Henry IV in the case of James VI. The ambassador believed that the pope would rather endorse the accession of James VI in England if he nominally converted to the Catholic religion than to support the Spanish claim. Two years later, the duke of Sessa again voiced doubts that the pope intended to support Spain's claims to the English throne.

In September 1597, Sessa wrote to Cardinal–Archduke Albert of Austria, the fiancé of the Infanta Isabella for whom Philip II had been claiming the English crown, that there were individuals with evil intentions at the papal court. These men had spoken to the Cardinal–Nephew Pietro Aldobrandini and tried to convince him that England should not fall into Spanish hands. They wished James VI of Scotland to succeed in England, in the hope that he would eventually convert. These individuals, Sessa continued, had assured Cardinal Aldobrandini that this was the best solution for returning both England and Scotland to the obedience of the Holy See: mildness would achieve much more than Spanish weapons and ambition.<sup>388</sup> The ambassador took offence at such anti-Spanish schemes and decided to address Aldobrandini on the subject.

As an accomplished diplomat, Sessa approached the delicate issue carefully. The ambassador did not confront the cardinal–nephew with his knowledge that the cardinal had been engaged in conversations which were directed against Spain's interests. Sessa chose to tell Aldobrandini that he had heard of certain discourses held at the papal court and that he presumed that these talks had also reached the ears of the cardinal–nephew and of the pope. Sessa complained to Aldobrandini that the general attitude on the Italian peninsula was that 'if infidels and heretics can be returned to the obedience of the Holy See by means which do not redound to the security, authority and aggrandisement of the crown of Spain, it is very well to do it'. However, if this could not be done without Spain's help, then it was a lesser evil 'to preserve the Turks and heretics than that the pope and cardinals would have to be the chaplains of [Philip II] and the potentates of Italy his slaves'. In Sessa's opinion, these were 'Machiavellian pieces of advice' and the people who gave them were hypocrites: after all, these individuals condemned Philip II's actions as 'ambitious', 'non-Christian' and 'solely based on the reason of state just as if this idol were not adored in Italy more than in

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<sup>388</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 969, f. 135: Sessa to Cardinal–Archduke Albert, 19 Sept 1597. Copy forwarded with: *ibid.*, f. 134: Sessa to Philip II, 28 Sept 1597.

any other part of the world'.<sup>389</sup>

Sessa thus criticised the Italian powers for deeming that Philip II's deeds were only motivated by political interests and that the king tried to cloak this fact by professing that all his actions were directed towards the interest of Catholicism. Simultaneously, Sessa accused the Italian rulers of doing exactly the same: because Spain's presence in Italy was to the detriment of their own interests, they were willing to compromise with 'heretics' and 'infidels', the worst enemies of the Catholic religion. Ultimately, Sessa's accusation implied that the Italian rulers – the pope included – regarded Spain's hegemony and ambitions as a threat to Christendom which was worse than the dangers posed to it by the Protestants and Ottomans. Inevitably, such an interpretation rendered any papal policy anti-Spanish as soon as it did not comply with Spain's interests or demands, even if its main purpose was not solely directed against Spain.

Cardinal Aldobrandini decisively rejected Sessa's insinuation that Clement VIII would pay attention to any Machiavellian, anti-Spanish advice and showed himself indignant that Sessa did not appreciate how much the pope wished the infanta to become queen of England. Of course, the cardinal-nephew conceded, it was possible that some Italian princes and a couple of individuals at the papal court only cared for their interests but the ambassador surely knew that it was impossible to forbid others to talk.<sup>390</sup> Despite Aldobrandini's assurances, Clement VIII eventually did not support the Spanish claim to the English throne.

In early and late 1601 and from autumn 1602 to Queen Elizabeth I's death in spring 1603, the Aldobrandini pope tried to make the Spanish and French kings agree on a Catholic individual whom they would assist to obtain the English crown by a joint military enterprise.<sup>391</sup> From Spain's perspective, the pope's efforts to install an unquestionably Catholic candidate on the English throne who was agreeable to Spain and France looked suspiciously anti-Spanish: instead of openly or secretly supporting the infanta, Clement VIII's diplomatic endeavours undermined Spain's ambitions in England. In the opinion of Spain's ambassador in Rome, the pope wished to avoid England falling 'into our hands or into those of someone favorable to us, envy of our greatness permitting such behavior'.<sup>392</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> Ibid., f. 135: Sessa to Cardinal-Archduke Albert, 19 Sept 1597.

<sup>390</sup> Ibid.

<sup>391</sup> Jules Berger de Xivrey (ed.), *Recueil des lettres missives de Henri IV*, vol. V (1599–1602) (Paris, 1850), p. 519; Houssaie (ed.), *Letres*, vol. V (Amsterdam, 1708), pp. 46–47, 55–56; ASV, *FB*, *serie II*, 491, ff. 54v–57v: Clement VIII to Henry IV, 2 Dec 1602; ff. 58r–59v: Clement VIII to Henry IV, 13 Jan 1603; TNA, *P.R.O.*, 31/9/86B, f. 102: Aldobrandini to Del Bufalo, 16 Dec 1602; AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 17 Jan 1603; no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 13 March 1603; no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 23 March 1603; Schneider, 'A kingdom', pp. 125, 127–128.

<sup>392</sup> Translated and quoted in: Allen, *Philip III*, p. 75.

The pope, however, was not simply motivated by anti-Spanish sentiments; Clement VIII tried to combine several temporal interests in a *Realpolitik* which ultimately also served the Catholic cause in Christendom.

The pope's interest as the head of the Papal States was certainly one of Clement VIII's concerns.<sup>393</sup> As we have seen, the pope had absolved Henry IV and thus contributed towards the restoration of the French kingdom as a mighty Catholic power which could check Spain's hegemony and help loosen the Spanish grip on the Holy See. It was therefore not in the pope's interest to increase the Spanish sphere of influence by helping the king of Spain to obtain the English throne for the infanta. Secondly, Clement VIII probably doubted that Spain had the military strength to conquer England, given that the Spanish armadas against England had failed in 1588, 1596–1597 and 1601–1602.

Thirdly, at least in November 1601, the Aldobrandini pope had nourished the hope that he could make Henry IV and Philip III agree on installing a remote descendant of the House of Plantagenet on the English throne: Cardinal Odoardo Farnese (1573–1626) or his brother Ranuccio Farnese, the duke of Parma (r. 1592–1622) and husband of the pontiff's grand-niece Margherita Aldobrandini (1588–1646).<sup>394</sup> Clement VIII was the son of a Florentine exile and advocate. Had he managed to marry a relative into a ducal family which even obtained a royal title, then he would have created the foundations for potential further marital alliances between the Aldobrandini and noble houses on the Italian peninsula and beyond.<sup>395</sup> This would have allowed Clement VIII to establish the Aldobrandini more permanently as an important noble family beyond his death. As difficult as the practicalities of making a member of the Farnese family king of England may have been, the English succession crisis offered Clement VIII an opportunity to try and accumulate further social capital for his family.<sup>396</sup>

Last but not least, Clement VIII feared that the French king would lend military support to James VI if Philip III tried to obtain England for his sister, Archduchess Isabella. As a consequence, one of the greatest diplomatic achievements in Clement's reign, the peace of Vervins, would have definitively become a dead letter: the pope was already worried enough about the consequences of Henry IV's secret support for the war of the

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<sup>393</sup> For more details, see also: Schneider, 'A kingdom', pp. 124–129, 134, 138 (footnote 66).

<sup>394</sup> Houssaie (ed.), *Letres*, vol. V, pp. 46–47, 55.

<sup>395</sup> For the wedding strategies of papal families, see: Irene Fosi and Maria Antonietta Visceglia, 'Marriage and politics at the papal court in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries', in Trevor Dean and Kate J. P. Lowe (eds.), *Marriage in Italy (1300–1650)* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 197–224.

<sup>396</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, 'The forms of capital', in John G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education* (New York, 1986), pp. 248–252.

Dutch against the Spanish Habsburgs.<sup>397</sup> It is crucial to bear in mind that Clement VIII regarded peace among Catholic princes not only as good in itself but also as a prerequisite for forming a league against the advancing Ottomans.

As we have seen in the General Introduction, it was the task of the spiritual head of the *respublica christiana* to make peace in Christendom in order to unite the (Catholic) princes against the Ottomans. Clement VIII partly managed to fulfil this task: he made peace between Spain and France in 1598 and again between France and Savoy in 1601. Moreover, the pope relentlessly reminded the Catholic princes to attack the Ottomans, supported the emperor financially and even sent papal troops to Hungary.<sup>398</sup> From the pope's perspective, Spain's attempts to obtain the English crown for Isabella therefore undermined his chief objectives as the spiritual leader of the *respublica christiana*: to preserve the Franco-Spanish peace and to defend Christendom against the Ottomans.

Despite Spanish anxieties, the Aldobrandini pontiff did not follow a Machiavellian policy which aimed at securing the English throne for a 'heretic' in order to prevent the accession of a Spanish claimant in England. Yet, the pope tried to prevent Spain from obtaining the English crown for the infanta: from late 1600 up to Elizabeth I's death, the pope sounded out whether it was possible to make the Spanish and French kings agree on an undoubtedly Catholic pretender to the English throne. Thus the pope neither confirmed the worst fears of the Spanish nor did he comply with their demands to support the claim of the infanta. Clement VIII's efforts to find a way to install an alternative to James VI on the English throne show that, contrary to the predominant view in historiography, the pope was not led into diplomatic passivity by mere assurances that James would convert after his potential accession in England. Clement was a careful politician who tried to combine several interests in one policy: his interest as an Italian prince, peace in Christendom, the war against the Ottomans and the restoration of the Catholic faith in England. As we will see, the pontiff employed the same universal approach in his attitude towards a possible Anglo-Spanish peace after James VI/I's accession had become reality in spring 1603.

## **5.2. War or peace? Opinions in Spain and Rome (1603)**

On 21 April 1603, the Spanish Council of State met to discuss the news of Queen Elizabeth I's death and of King James's succession to the English throne. The council was confronted with the problem that it was not yet entirely clear whether King James had secured the English crown without any difficulties or whether his accession could still be prevented,

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<sup>397</sup> ASV, *FB, serie II*, 491, ff. 56v and 57v: Clement VIII to Henry IV, 2 Dec 1602; f. 59r–v: Clement VIII to Henry IV, 13 Jan 1603.

<sup>398</sup> Bartl, 'Türkenkrieg', passim; Niederkorn, *Mächte*, pp. 70–102.

maybe – just as the pope had wished in the past – with the help of Henry IV of France. If James VI had successfully ascended the English throne, then the council had to review whether Philip III should continue to make war against England or envisage making peace. After all, the king had been at war with Elizabeth I of England but not with James VI of Scotland.<sup>399</sup> This subchapter analyses which course of action the Spanish Council of State and the pope recommended Philip III to take and the degree to which the Spanish intended to listen to the pope's opinion on matters relating to England.

During the meeting of the Spanish Council of State on 21 April 1603, the count of Olivares, Enrique de Guzmán (1540–1607),<sup>400</sup> deemed that the Spanish ambassador in Rome, Sessa, should discern the pope's thoughts on the news of Elizabeth I's death. The ambassador should also tell Clement VIII that there had been no enmity between James VI and the king of Spain; in the past, Philip III had treated King James like a friend and in as much as religion was concerned, the Spanish king 'felt sorry for him'. Sessa should ensure the pope that Philip's decisions in this matter depended on the judgment of the pontiff because his opinion enjoyed great authority with the Spanish king. Moreover, Olivares thought that Clement VIII should know that peace with King James was as much an option for Spain as making war.<sup>401</sup> Clearly Olivares wanted to prevent giving the impression that Spain suffered from any military weakness or would make peace for political considerations rather than for the interest of religion. The constable of Castile differed with Olivares's opinion.

Juan Fernández de Velasco argued that Philip III had neither sufficient support in England nor the required military means to obstruct James's accession to the English throne. For this reason, as we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, the constable recommended that Sessa should sound out whether the pope would work for an Anglo-Spanish peace and thus help improving the lot of the English Catholics.<sup>402</sup> The primary source does not provide any information on the reasons which caused the constable to think that the pope might be inclined to promote peace between Philip III and James VI/I. In absence of any direct evidence I can therefore only suggest here that Clement VIII's past achievements and dedication to peace induced the constable to believe that Clement VIII's concern for peace in Christendom would make him inclined towards procuring peace

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<sup>399</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 840, ff. 210 and 211: consulta, 21 April 1603; Allen, *Philip III*, pp. 106–107.

<sup>400</sup> Enrique de Guzmán was Philip II's ambassador in Rome (1582–1591), viceroy of Sicily (1591–1595) and of Naples (1595–1599). In 1601, he became a member of the Spanish Council of State. His son, Gaspar de Guzmán, count-duke of Olivares (1587–1645), was to become the famous favourite of Philip IV (r. 1621–1665). John H. Elliott, *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline* (New Haven, 1986), pp. 11–13.

<sup>401</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 840, f. 210: consulta, 21 April 1603.

<sup>402</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 211: consulta, 21 April 1603.

across confessional boundaries. After all, Clement VIII had followed a policy of moderation after Henry IV's conversion – which the Spanish regarded as feigned – and proved his concern for peace in Christendom by restoring peace among Catholic powers in 1598 and 1601. Did the constable possibly expect the pope to combine this moderation towards a 'heretical' ruler with his concern for peace in Christendom and for the Catholic cause in England?

As former governor of Milan (1592–1600), Velasco was certainly particularly familiar with Clement VIII's desire that peace in Christendom would allow the Catholic powers to wage war against the Ottomans. Possibly, in Milan he may even have received reports on the rumours that Clement VIII would reconcile Philip II with Elizabeth I in 1598 (see Chapter 3.1.). Also, in late August 1598, the constable went to Ferrara in order to congratulate Clement VIII for the successful reintegration of the fief of Ferrara into the Papal States.<sup>403</sup> Thus it is even possible that he had heard these rumours himself and recalled them in the meeting of 1603. In any case, the minutes of the meeting of the Council of State on 21 April indicate that the other advisers did not share Velasco's high expectations of the pope as a transconfessional peacemaker.<sup>404</sup>

On 29 April, the council met again and discussed whether the Spanish king should send an envoy or ambassador to England and whether he thus should signal his favourable disposition towards James VI/I. The count of Olivares argued that Spain should not remain inactive in the field of diplomacy only because they had to wait for more certain news from England. The former ambassador at the Holy See again recommended that, in the meantime, Sessa should try to discern the pope's thoughts and to make Clement VIII feel obliged to Spain: Sessa should tell the pontiff that Philip III intended to comply with the pope's opinion and that the Spanish king would neither send any envoy to King James nor do anything else without Clement VIII's approbation. Olivares, however, did not truly think that Spain should follow whatever policy Clement VIII would propose. On the contrary. Olivares recommended that Sessa should use his diplomatic skills for directing the pontiff's attention to Philip III's own interest and advantage. Meanwhile, until Spain learnt the pope's opinion on the matter, the king should not decide whom to send to King James, or at least he should keep his choice secret.<sup>405</sup> The count of Miranda, Juan de Zúñiga (1541–1608),<sup>406</sup> was more serious than Olivares that Philip III should comply with the pontiff's opinion on the whole affair.

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<sup>403</sup> Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIV, p. 402 (footnote 2).

<sup>404</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 840, ff. 210, 211: consulta, 21 April 1603.

<sup>405</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 622, f. 248 – 1: consulta, 29 April 1603.

<sup>406</sup> Miranda was the adviser of Philip III's favourite, the duke of Lerma, and his ally in the council. Antonio Feros, *Kingship and Favoritism in the Spain of Philip III (1598–1621)* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 59–60.

The count of Miranda pointed out that both Philip II and Philip III had waged war against England for one principal objective: returning the kingdom to the obedience of the Holy See. Therefore, Miranda asserted, Philip III should begin the negotiations with James by asking the pope for his opinion before he decided to take any further steps. Miranda wanted to remind Clement that the Spanish king intended to work for the benefit of Spain as well as of the Catholic faith, the Holy See and the common good of Christendom. The pontiff should know that for these reasons, and for the respect which Philip III had for the pope as the 'universal father', the Spanish king would not approach King James without discussing such a step first with the pontiff. Miranda emphasised that Philip III always had to prefer the cause of the Catholic religion over anything else and had to follow the pontiff as his guide since the pope was the 'head and judge' of the Catholic Church.<sup>407</sup>

As a matter of fact, however, on 29 April, the very day that some councillors recommended the king to ask the pope for his opinion about entering into contact with the new ruler in England, Philip III had already taken a decision. The Spanish monarch approved an instruction which tasked Don Juan de Tassis (d. 1607) to congratulate King James for his accession to the English throne.<sup>408</sup> The Spanish Council of State discussed James VI/I's accession and the opportunities which arose from it in further meetings.<sup>409</sup> On 31 May 1603, the count of Miranda pointed out that peace with England would be convenient for Spain but they had to proceed carefully in order to avoid leaving the impression that the Spanish king desired it greatly.<sup>410</sup> The cardinal-archbishop of Toledo, Bernardo de Rojas y Sandoval (1546–1618) and great-uncle of Philip III's favourite, the duke of Lerma,<sup>411</sup> concurred with Miranda. The cardinal also advised the king to signal to King James that he was equally inclined to making peace as he was to waging war. Bernardo de Rojas y Sandoval emphasised that James VI/I's accession offered a great opportunity to help the English Catholics who, according to the cardinal, were devoted to the Spanish king. Thus, by means of negotiations, 'much could be done for the religion and the state'. The cardinal, however, also added a caveat: before Philip III envisaged negotiations with King James, he had to ask the pope for his opinion because he would be 'negotiating peace with a king who is a heretic'.<sup>412</sup>

We have seen in Chapter 3 that in 1599 the Spanish Council of State had thought that

<sup>407</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 622, f. 251: consulta, 29 April 1603.

<sup>408</sup> Loomie, 'Toleration', pp. 5, 12.

<sup>409</sup> E.g.: AGS, *Estado*, 840, f. 215: consulta, 4 May 1603; *ibid.*, f. 215: consulta, 11 May 1603.

<sup>410</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 840, f. 213: consulta, 31 May 1603.

<sup>411</sup> Hillard von Thiessen, 'Familienbande und Kreaturenlohn: der (Kardinal-)Herzog von Lerma und die Kronkardinäle Philips III. von Spanien', in Karsten (ed.), *Jagd*, p. 107.

<sup>412</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 840, f. 213: consulta, 31 May 1603.

it was sufficient to ask the royal confessor whether the king could negotiate peace with the excommunicated queen of England. The discussions at the council in 1603, on the other hand, show that some of the king's advisers – the count of Olivares, the constable of Castile, the count of Miranda and the cardinal of Toledo – deemed that the Spanish king should enquire Clement VIII's opinion on possible Anglo-Spanish peace negotiations. This then poses the question: why had it become necessary to consult the pope on peace with the new English king by 1603? From a Catholic perspective, making peace with the excommunicated queen of England certainly would have been even more problematic than with James VI/I: after all, King James – once a baptised Catholic as a child – had not been declared an excommunicate by the Church despite his apostasy from the Catholic faith. This shift in the Spanish Council of State from 1599 to 1603 is difficult to explain but I will try to find a possible answer nevertheless.

The primary source of the meeting of 1599 is only a summary of the conclusions which the councillors had reached. This summary does not reveal the opinion of individual advisers and does not indicate who was present at the meeting, except for the king and his confessor.<sup>413</sup> Patrick Williams observed that, between 1598 and 1601, Philip III convened the Council of State irregularly, that the king neglected to define clearly who actually was a member of the council and that the councillors often were not present at meetings. Also, the king left Madrid for a prolonged period of time in order to welcome his new bride in Spain in 1599. Not all councillors were able to follow the king's court and therefore the council only met in reduced numbers.<sup>414</sup> It is therefore difficult to ascertain who was present at the meeting in 1599 during which the councillors decided that it was sufficient to ask the king's confessor whether the Catholic king could negotiate peace with Elizabeth I. On the other hand, there is clear evidence that the four councillors who told the king that it was necessary to consult Clement VIII on peace with James in 1603 did not attend the meeting back in 1599. The constable was still governor of Milan in 1599 and Miranda was not able to follow the king on his journey while the cardinal of Toledo and the count of Olivares attended the council for the first time in June 1600 and November 1601 respectively.<sup>415</sup>

Each of these advisers of course had his own reasons for recommending that Philip III should enquire the pope's opinion about the affairs in England. As we have seen, as the former governor of Milan, the constable was especially familiar with Clement VIII's dedication to peace in Christendom and to the war against the Sublime Porte. It was

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<sup>413</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1855, no f.: consulta, 20 June 1599.

<sup>414</sup> Patrick Williams, 'Philip III and the restoration of Spanish government, 1598–1603', *The English Historical Review*, 88 (1973), pp. 758–759, 763, 766. See also: Feros, *Kingship*, pp. 48–63.

<sup>415</sup> Williams, 'Philip III', pp. 759, 764–766.



probably for this reason that he deemed that Clement VIII himself potentially would promote peace between Spain and the Protestant king of England. Bernardo de Rojas y Sandoval was cardinal–archbishop of Toledo and named religious concerns about making peace with a 'heretic'. The count of Miranda, according to the pope's nuncio, was reputed as being 'full of desire to please His Holiness'.<sup>416</sup> And indeed, Miranda reminded Philip III that he owed respect to the pope and wished the king to make clear to Clement VIII that he was respecting the pontiff's opinion in particular in English matters since they also concerned questions of religion. The count of Olivares had represented the Spanish king at the Holy See as ambassador from 1582–1591 and subsequently continued to observe the policies of the papacy in his capacities as viceroy of Sicily (1591–1595) and of Naples (1595–1599).<sup>417</sup> The discussion in 1603 demonstrated that Olivares advice mainly aimed at ensuring that the pope recognised that his authority carried weight in Spain.

Therefore, the deference to the pope in 1603 presumably was mainly a result of the particular composition of the Council of State rather than of a general sense at the Spanish court that Spain needed approval from the Holy See for making peace with the Protestant king of England. As a matter of fact, the response of the councillors to Clement VIII's attitude towards King James VI/I will demonstrate that the Spanish councillors were more concerned about the reputation of Spain in Rome than about the pontiff's opinion on English affairs (see Chapter 5.3.). First however, it is necessary to shed light on the pope's attitude towards potential Anglo-Spanish peace talks after King James's accession in England.

In early May 1603, Clement VIII told the Spanish ambassador in Rome, the duke of Sessa, that, as far as he knew, King James intended to preserve peace with everybody and that he did not wish to continue Elizabeth I's war with Spain. Clement VIII thought that James was by his nature a peaceful prince, a friend of letters rather than of arms and even inclined towards the Catholics. In the past, James VI had signalled that he was willing to consider a conversion and even if the king did not convert, Clement VIII expected King James to allow the English Catholics to practise their religion freely. The pope knew that the king would not be able to grant them liberty of conscience without the consent of parliament but he believed that the new monarch in England would not prosecute his Catholic subjects. The pontiff hoped that James VI/I would simply tolerate the Catholics just as he tolerated that his wife, Anne of Denmark, adhered to the Catholic faith.<sup>418</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Ricardo de Hinojosa (ed.), *Los despachos de la diplomacia pontificia en España: memoria de una misión oficial en el Archivo Secreto de la Santa Sede* (Madrid, 1896), p. 402.

<sup>417</sup> Elliott, *Olivares*, pp. 11–13.

<sup>418</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 4 May 1603.

Despite his hope that James would convert or would allow the English Catholics to practise their religion, the pontiff also expressed reservations about the king's intentions.

According to Sessa, Clement VIII deemed that up to the present day it had been reasonable to suspect that Queen Anne and King James had assured the pope of the king's good will towards the Catholic faith in order to prevent the pontiff and other princes from obstructing James VI's accession in England (see also Chapter 4.1.). The pope thought that the moment of truth was approaching now. If James VI/I continued to hint at a possible conversion, Clement VIII intended to let the king know that it was now time to prove his words true. The pontiff wanted to see whether King James truly wished to live in peace with all Catholic princes, Philip III and Archduke Albert included. Additionally, the pontiff would watch closely how King James treated his Catholic subjects and whether he 'continued to be their henchman' like Elizabeth I.<sup>419</sup> But what course of action did the pope intend to envisage if the king did not convert?

Clement VIII's problem was, Sessa explained, that Spain would not be able to conquer England if James VI/I persevered in his heresy: the English kingdom had been united with Scotland without any difficulties and James was allied with France, Sweden, Denmark and Protestant princes in the Holy Roman Empire. Given these circumstances, the pontiff did not have any other choice than to recommend Philip III to make peace with the 'heretical' king of England. However, Sessa observed, Clement VIII could not bring himself to give any such advice. From his conversation with the pope, the Spanish ambassador gathered that Clement concurred with the predominant opinion at the papal court: if the Stuart king abstained from supporting the Dutch rebels, forbade his subjects to disrupt Spanish navigation by committing piracy and desisted from persecuting the English Catholics, then Philip III should make peace with James VI/I.<sup>420</sup> Sessa's letter confirms again that the Aldobrandini pope did not blindly believe in James VI/I's conversion but did expect at least some relief for the Catholics in England. Clement VIII clearly deemed that Spain was not able to win the war against England but he also felt that he could not recommend explicitly that a Catholic king should make peace with a Protestant prince. At least not yet.

After James VI/I's accession, Archduke Albert had released all detained English soldiers and granted English vessels access to all harbours which the archdukes controlled in the Low Countries. In return, on 3 May, King James ordered the English soldiers in the

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<sup>419</sup> Ibid.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid.

Low Countries to enter into a ceasefire.<sup>421</sup> Thus already one day before Sessa related that the pope wanted to see a sign of good will from James VI/I, he had given exactly such a sign. This probably encouraged the pontiff to send an autograph letter to Philip III on the subject of Spain's relations with James VI/I.

On 2 June 1603, Clement VIII wrote to the Spanish king that the situation for the Catholic faith on the British Isles would hopefully improve soon now that Elizabeth I was dead.<sup>422</sup> In the pope's opinion, the Spanish king had to choose between two paths: one path was to use military force and the other was to negotiate with the new king of England. In the past, the pontiff emphasised, Spain's recourse to arms had not had the desired effect and now that England and Ireland were united with Scotland, the prospects of military success had become even smaller.

In the pope's opinion, using military force only risked the massacre of the last Catholics remaining in England and Scotland. Clement VIII reminded the Spanish king that Christendom was currently in a bad state since it was under attack by the Ottomans and that Philip III was also engaged in a war in the Low Countries. Moreover, if the Spanish monarch only considered to respond to James VI/I's accession by military force, he risked Spain's peace with Henry IV. On this peace, however, the pope emphasised, relied the wellbeing and ruin of the whole of Christendom.<sup>423</sup> Clearly, Clement VIII intended to do more than merely discouraging Philip III from continuing his war against England: the pope's reference to the Franco-Spanish peace demonstrates that the pope also feared that the king of Spain still considered to pursue the Spanish pretensions to the English throne and that such an enterprise would be met by Henry IV's opposition.

For the above reasons, Clement VIII concluded that Philip III should envisage negotiating with King James and that he should treat him with kindness and mildness. Clement VIII had learnt that James VI/I was a person of mild spirits and inclined towards calm and peace. Recourse to arms was therefore not necessary; rather, the king's favourable disposition should be used to preserve the little remainders of the Catholic religion in James's kingdoms. The pope believed that, if he did not err, cultivating King James's friendly disposition towards the Catholic religion was the best option. Clement therefore hoped that Philip III and James VI/I would establish good relations and that the Spanish king would 'free himself of a fastidious and expensive war'.<sup>424</sup> Evidently, the pope no longer hesitated to recommend the Spanish king to make peace with a 'heretic'.

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<sup>421</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty*, p. 166.

<sup>422</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 840, f. 191: Clement VIII to Philip III, 2 June 1603; Schneider, 'A kingdom', pp. 130–131.

<sup>423</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 840, f. 191: Clement VIII to Philip III, 2 June 1603.

<sup>424</sup> Ibid.

Clement VIII explained that it was his particular goal to help the Catholics in England and if the Spanish king followed the pope's advice, he would contribute towards it infinitely. Therefore it was important to prevent the circulation of any books or other treatises which would offend James and which could turn him against the Catholics. The Spanish king should follow the pope's advice to maintain good relations with King James because it combined both the temporal interest of Philip III and the interests of God. Clement VIII tried to convince Philip III that peace with James VI/I would protect Spain's trade with the Indies since the English would also cease freebooting. Moreover, the pope deemed that an Anglo-Spanish peace would favour the pacification of Flanders.<sup>425</sup> Presumably Clement VIII thought that King James VI/I would stop supporting the Dutch rebels against Philip III and the archdukes.

The pacification of the Low Countries will be examined in more detail in the next chapter. It is, however, necessary to emphasise here that Clement VIII approached particular problems with a universal perspective. The pope's policies towards a reconciliation of the Spanish Habsburgs with James VI/I and the Dutch constituted part of one wider policy. This policy aimed at peace and stability in Christendom, the restoration of the Catholic religion in England and the Low Countries and at the war against the Ottomans. The pope underlined the importance of the anti-Ottoman war especially in his letter to the Spanish king.

Philip III, Clement VIII stressed in his epistle, would contribute towards peace in the whole of Christendom if he made peace with James VI/I and would become able to concentrate his forces on the war against the Ottoman Empire which was already threatening the Italian peninsula. The pontiff felt that he could not emphasise enough how important it was that Philip III supported his Habsburg relatives, Emperor Rudolf II and Archduke Ferdinand (r. Inner Austria 1590–1637; emperor 1619–1637) in their anti-Ottoman war since their territories were exposed to extreme danger.<sup>426</sup> As explained in the General Introduction, Clement VIII's diplomatic efforts to unite the forces of the Catholic princes against the Ottoman Empire and his military and financial contributions for Emperor Rudolf II were immense. Thus, the pope's exhortation to the Spanish king to come to terms with James VI/I and to wage war against the Ottomans was certainly not mere papal rhetoric.

Clearly, Clement VIII hoped that King James's alleged friendly disposition towards his Catholic subjects and towards the Catholic faith offered an opportunity to work for the

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<sup>425</sup> Ibid.

<sup>426</sup> Ibid.

Catholic cause in England and, at the same time, to get one step closer to defending Christendom against the Ottomans. For this, however, the pope had to convince Philip III not to attempt to dethrone King James in favour of a Spanish candidate. Certainly, Clement did not wish Spain to increase its sphere of influence by controlling England. However, the pontiff also doubted that Spain had the military strength to dethrone King James all alone. The pontiff feared that a Spanish attempt to obtain the English crown would induce Henry IV to renew his war with Spain and that it would certainly upset James VI/I against the English Catholics. Therefore, the pope thought that, rather than venturing a risky enterprise in England, Philip III should end the war with England. Peace with James VI/I could even have a positive effect on the outcome of Spain's war against the Dutch and would thus free the Spanish forces from all its military engagements for the anti-Ottoman war.

The letter thus mainly employed the argument that peace with James VI/I would ultimately serve the interest of the Catholic religion in England and that, in the meantime, the Spanish king would be able to help protect Christendom against the Ottomans. Evidently, Clement VIII felt that for these reasons, it was appropriate for him as pontiff not merely to approve silently of transconfessional peace negotiations but even to exhort a Catholic prince to make peace with a Protestant king. Notably, unlike during the preliminary peace talks between the Spanish Habsburgs and Queen Elizabeth I in 1599 and 1600, the pope did not insist that the Spanish king had to obtain securities for the English Catholics from James VI/I if he decided to make peace with England. The pope's recommendation in favour of peace with King James largely coincided with the opinion of the Spanish Council of State, and yet, as the next subchapter will show, the pope's view on the affairs in England caused discontent in Spain.

### **5.3. Peace with James VI/I: a means or an end? (1603–1604)**

By the time of James VI/I's accession, the Spanish had suffered several military defeats against the Dutch and the English. The Spanish king and his advisers in the Council of State therefore recognised by 1603 that Spain was not able 'to achieve benefits for the Catholics of Europe through the use of force'.<sup>427</sup> The analysis of the meetings of the Spanish Council of State in the wake of Elizabeth I's death has shown that several of the king's advisers thought that Philip III should consider making peace with James VI/I but that the king should also ask for the pope's opinion on the matter. The previous subchapter also demonstrated that Clement VIII deemed that the Spanish king should envisage peace negotiations with James. The pope's advice thus corresponded with the predominant

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<sup>427</sup> Allen, *Philip III*, p. 242.

opinion of the Spanish Council of State. Nevertheless, as this subchapter elucidates, the pope's advice was not only embraced at the Spanish court. This subchapter shows that, in principle, the Spanish court welcomed Clement VIII's exhortation that Philip III should make peace with the new, Protestant ruler on the English throne but that the Spanish also resented the pope's attitude towards King James and his arguments for peace.

On 13 July, Philip III's first favourite, the duke of Lerma, Francisco Gómez de Sandoval y Rojas (c. 1552–1625), handed a Spanish translation of Clement VIII's letter over to the king.<sup>428</sup> The Spanish Council of State discussed the papal missive on 22 July 1603.<sup>429</sup> In this meeting, the grand commander of León, Don Juan de Idíaquez (1540–1614), concluded that the arguments of the pope in favour of peace negotiations rather than war were so compelling that the king should envisage peace with James VI/I. The grand commander added that this would be the right decision anyway, given that the king had already sent Juan de Tassis on an embassy to England (see Chapter 5.2.). Idíaquez hoped that peace negotiations would allow Spain to secure liberty of conscience for the Catholics in England. Diego Enríquez de Guzmán y Toledo, 5th count of Alba de Liste (c. 1530–1604), concurred with the grand commander of León. He thought that the pope's letter was convenient for Spain: at the moment, the king had no other choice than to envisage negotiations since the Spanish army was not ready for any military enterprise against England anyway. The count therefore thought that it was 'of much consolation' to start peace talks 'with the advice and approbation of the supreme pontiff'.

The count of Olivares also deemed that the option to negotiate peace had received 'great defence' in the pope's letter. Olivares, however, recommended the king that in his reply to Clement VIII, he should emphasise that he had many reasons for taking up arms against James VI/I but that he now would embrace negotiations in order to comply with the pope's opinion.<sup>430</sup> Philip III followed Olivares's piece of advice and told Clement VIII on 23 August that the papal letter had reached him just as he was resolving whether he should oppose King James or make peace with England. The king asserted that he had been more inclined towards using force but because he learnt that the pope approved more of the path of negotiations, he decided to obey the pope and to follow Clement VIII's 'paternal advice' by means of which he intended to obtain for the English Catholics the freedom to practise

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<sup>428</sup> Loomie, 'Toleration', p. 20. For the translation of the letter see: AGS, *Estado*, 840, f. 192: Clement VIII to Philip III, 2 June 1603. For Lerma see: Feros, *Kingship*, passim; Patrick Williams, *The Great Favourite: The Duke of Lerma and the Court and Government of Philip III of Spain (1598–1621)* (Manchester, 2006).

<sup>429</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 840, f. 223: consulta, 22 July 1603. For the summary see: *ibid.*, f. 215: consulta, 4 May 1603.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 223: consulta, 22 July 1603.

their religion.<sup>431</sup>

The discussion of Clement VIII's letter for Philip III in the council reveals two important points. Firstly, the Spanish attributed a considerable significance to the advice of Clement VIII. *Nota bene*, the importance of the pope's opinion did not derive from its value as a piece of advice in its own right. Rather, Clement's opinion was useful for the Spanish because it concurred with the accommodating policy upon which Spain intended to embark anyway: now, this policy enjoyed the approbation of the pontiff. Clearly, the councillors deemed that, if necessary, the pope's approval and even recommendation of a peace with the 'heretical' ruler of England would facilitate defending Spain's decision to envisage negotiations with the English. This signifies that the pontiff's opinion did not necessarily have any direct influence on Spanish policy making but Spain thought that the pope's authority could play an important part in how Catholic Christendom would react to a Spanish policy of rapprochement with 'heretics'.

The referral of the question whether Spain should make peace with James VI/I to the pope and Clement VIII's reply allowed the Spanish king and his ambassadors abroad to counter criticism that Spain's accommodating policy towards the 'heretical' ruler on the English throne proved that the Spanish kings had been cloaking their pursuit of political goals and of the aggrandisement of Spain's dominance under the pretext of defending the Catholic cause in Christendom: the Spanish could emphasise that they only considered making peace with a 'heretic' upon approval and even at the insistence of the pope. Moreover, such a referral of the question to the pontiff served Philip III, Lerma and the favourite's supporters in the Council of State to refute opposition to the accommodating policy of Philip III towards 'heretics' at the Spanish court and from within the king's dominions: they could underline that their decision to make peace with a 'heretic' had been influenced and approved by the pope and thus by the supreme judge in matters of faith. For example, when the archbishop of Valencia, Juan de Ribera (1533–1611), who had been and remained 'completely opposed to any understanding with England' sent a memorandum to Philip III in 1608 in which he criticised that, in the Peace of London (1604), the king had made peace with a 'heretic', the Council of State replied that this peace had been concluded not only with the consent of the king's confessor, Fray Gaspar de Córdoba, but also with the approval of the pope.<sup>432</sup> More generally, these considerations also suggest that the Spanish Council deemed that the pope's opinion still carried a significant weight and authority among Catholic rulers and people in the disintegrating *respublica christiana*.

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<sup>431</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 93: Philip III to Clement VIII, 23 Aug 1603; AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Philip III to Sessa, 23 Aug 1603.

<sup>432</sup> García García, *Pax*, p. 47.

Secondly, the discussion of the papal autograph and the king's reply for the pope also show that the pontiff's position as head of Catholic Christendom could be used in favour of Spain's reputation.<sup>433</sup> As we have seen, Olivares advised the king to take advantage of Clement VIII's letter. The papal missive allowed the Spanish king to preserve his reputation as a powerful prince and to underline his devotion to the pope as an obedient son of the Holy See: Philip III could hide Spain's military weakness behind the claim that he only desisted from fighting James out of obedience to the pontiff and the Apostolic See. Thus, Spain could use the pope's authority as the spiritual head of Christendom to legitimise its accommodating policy towards a 'heretical' king to critics within and without of Philip III's dominions, to conceal its military exhaustion and to present the whole affair as an act of obedience to the Holy See.

However, there were also voices on the Spanish Council of State, even among the supporters of Lerma's policy of accommodation,<sup>434</sup> who expressed their dissatisfaction with Clement VIII's lenient attitude towards James VI/I. In particular, the cardinal-archbishop of Toledo, Bernardo de Rojas y Sandoval, doubted that a reconciliation with England would bear any fruit. The cardinal also remarked that 'the letter of the pope could give cause for concern if they did not have the opinion of His Holiness which they [already] had'.<sup>435</sup> Rojas y Sandoval did not elaborate on this remark but, clearly, this was an allusion to the feeling among the Spanish that Clement had been too lenient with Henry IV and now he displayed again a lack of rigor in the handling of another 'heretic'. At the end of July, there were further negative remarks about the pope's leniency towards James VI/I.

On 31 July 1603, nine days after the council had discussed Clement's recommendation to Philip III to entertain good relations with King James, the royal advisers met again. This time the council discussed two letters of Sessa. In the first letter, the ambassador reported that Clement VIII had approved of Archduke Albert's decision to congratulate James upon his accession in England and to offer him his friendship. The pope thought that this was 'not only convenient but also necessary' since Philip III did not have the forces to oppose King James VI/I.<sup>436</sup> In the second letter, Sessa related that the pontiff did not wish to offend James VI/I, given that he had ascended to the throne peacefully and that the English Catholics had been among the first to offer him obedience. The pope hoped

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<sup>433</sup> For this second observation on the discussion of Clement VIII's letter in the Spanish Council, see also: Schneider, 'A kingdom', pp. 128, 131–132.

<sup>434</sup> For Lerma and his international policies, see: García García, 'La *Pax Hispanica*', passim.

<sup>435</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 840, f. 223: consulta, 22 July 1603.

<sup>436</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 11: consulta, 31 July 1603; AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 22 May 1603.



that this would induce him to favour his Catholic subjects and maybe even to convert some day, especially since his wife allegedly already was Catholic with his permission.

At the papal court, according to Sessa, they did not believe that Spain had the military strength to occupy England or to force James VI/I into converting to the Catholic faith. After all, as people pointed out in Rome, even the powerful armadas of Philip II had not been able to defeat England when the English and Scottish forces had not yet been united. Moreover, to Elizabeth I's friendship with the king of France and the Dutch Provinces, James VI/I could add further allies: Denmark, Sweden and other 'heretical' princes and towns in the empire. Hence they believed at the papal court that in the current situation, it was best for Philip III to make peace with England.<sup>437</sup> The discussion of Sessa's letters in the Spanish Council of State shows that Philip III and his advisers were dissatisfied with Clement VIII even though the Spanish court had welcomed the pontiff's recommendation that Spain should make peace with James.

The Council of State, in its entirety, wished to emphasise that 'it hurt a lot to see this clearly that the *reglas politicas* had made such a great impression in Rome'. Subsequently, each councillor expressed his opinion on the matter. The grand commander of León, Don Juan de Idíquez, for example, was astonished that they did not take more offence at the papal court that James VI/I persecuted his Catholic subjects and remained obstinate in his heresy. Idíquez therefore deemed that it was necessary to pray to God that He would enkindle 'the heart of the pope with the fire of Christian love and holy zeal so that he will embrace this matter with the required warmth'.

The cardinal-archbishop of Toledo feared particularly for Spain's reputation as a military power and wished that the pope should learn that the Spanish crown was in a state which allowed it to fight whatever enemy. The cardinal complained that the pope spoke only with tepidity about the support which the English Catholics needed. Moreover, he thought that the pope should be reminded of the bad example of Henry IV who 'had given external, albeit feigned, signs' of his conversion and subsequently has shown negligence in restoring the Catholic religion in France.<sup>438</sup> Obviously, the cardinal wished to tell the pontiff that his lenient policy towards a ruler whose orthodoxy was questionable had already failed in the case of Henry IV; now Clement was risking a repetition of the same mistake with James VI/I.

The constable of Castile thought that the Spanish king should let Clement VIII know that he was able to gather a powerful military force. Furthermore, the constable repeated a

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<sup>437</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 11: consulta, 31 July 1603; AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 1 July 1603.

<sup>438</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 11: consulta, 31 July 1603.

piece of advice which the count of Olivares had given on 22 July (see also above): the constable deemed that Sessa should twist the truth and tell Clement VIII that Philip III had only decided to moderate himself and to envisage the path of negotiation in order to correspond with the pope's wish.<sup>439</sup> Clearly, like the cardinal–archbishop of Toledo, the constable was also worried about Spain's reputation as a military power. There was one more person who was particularly dissatisfied with Clement VIII: the Spanish king.

In the margins of the *consulta*, Philip III noted that he was concerned by 'the lukewarmness' of the pope. In the king's opinion, there did not exist any matters in the whole of Christendom which were more important than the current affairs in England. To his resentment, the pontiff approached them very differently than the king had hoped. Philip III felt that Clement VIII did not take enough care of his duty to look after the interest of the Catholic religion and of the Catholics in England.<sup>440</sup> Clearly, Philip III had expected that in the English affairs, the pontiff would show more support for Spain. Nevertheless, Philip III still hoped that he would be able to rouse the pope's religious vigour and convince him that a show of military power might be necessary in order to coerce James VI/I into conceding liberty of conscience to his Catholic subjects and maybe even into converting. Philip III noted on the *consulta* that he intended to send a letter to Rome in which he would announce his decision to help the English Catholics. The king aimed to incite the pope to take a more active part in the whole affair. Philip III also ordered that his naval forces should be prepared for early 1604 so that they could be used as circumstances would require. Finally, the king thought that it was a good idea to assign the blame for his soft dealings with King James to the pope whose opinion and advice he was following.<sup>441</sup> Therefore, on 23 August, following the advice of Olivares and of the constable of Castile, the king explained in letters to Sessa and Clement VIII that he had only abandoned the path of force for the path of peace because the pontiff had told him to do so (see also above).<sup>442</sup>

The discussions in the Council of State and the king's remark show that the Spanish councillors feared for the reputation of Spain. In his letter for the king of Spain and to Sessa, Clement VIII had expressed his opinion that Spain lacked the military force to oppose James VI/I. As mentioned at the beginning of this subchapter, the Spanish Council of State had realised by 1603 that Spain did not have the military strength to obtain its goals by means of arms. The pope's evaluation of Spain's military exhaustion therefore was

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<sup>439</sup> Ibid.

<sup>440</sup> Ibid.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid.

<sup>442</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Philip III to Sessa, 23 Aug 1603; AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 93: Philip III to Clement VIII, 23 Aug 1603.

accurate but the Spanish court could not suffer to see its reputation as a military power and as guarantor of the Catholic faith tarnished. Clement VIII's pragmatic recommendation to Philip III to make peace due to military necessity therefore caused displeasure in Spain: the Spanish court wanted to be seen as envisaging peace not out of military weakness but out of conviction that negotiations allowed Spain to improve the lot of the English Catholics. The remainder of this subchapter shows that the timeframes within which Clement VIII and the Spanish court intended to obtain an improvement of the Catholic cause in England were at variance and caused further dissatisfaction among the Spanish.

In October 1603, Philip III provided Juan Fernández de Velasco, the constable of Castile, with the powers to negotiate peace with England.<sup>443</sup> The constable sojourned for a long period of time in the Low Countries where he had to oversee the reform of the Spanish military forces stationed in Flanders. Earlier in 1603, Philip III had already tasked Don Juan de Tassis, since October 1603 count of Villamediana, to congratulate James VI/I to his accession. The constable's long stay in the Low Countries meant that, in the end, Villamediana rather than Velasco represented the Spanish king during the peace talks in London.<sup>444</sup>

The count of Villamediana and the archducal deputies, the count of Arenberg, Jean Richardot (1540–1609) and Louis Verreycken (d. 1621), decided that issues of religion should not hinder the peace negotiations. The envoys intended to introduce matters of religion only if the negotiations did not lead anywhere: religion thus was meant to serve as a pretext to break off the peace talks. The deputies deemed that it was best to let the constable of Castile address the situation of the Catholics in England once that the treaty was ready for signing.<sup>445</sup> Thus, they followed the policy of Archduke Albert who wished that religion would be left aside from the negotiations to the last possible point.<sup>446</sup> When the constable finally disembarked at Dover on 5 August 1604, Villamediana and the archduke's representatives had already successfully negotiated peace at Somerset House.<sup>447</sup> none of the clauses in the Treaty of London contained securities for the Catholics in England.<sup>448</sup> How did the pope feel about the Anglo-Spanish peace?

An agent of the duke of Mantua reported on 14 August that Clement VIII 'did not

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<sup>443</sup> Loomie, 'Toleration', p. 25.

<sup>444</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty*, pp. 151, 172.

<sup>445</sup> Thewlis, *Peace*, p. 222.

<sup>446</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty*, pp. 172–173. See also: AGS, *Estado*, 622, f. 143: Archduke Albert to Philip III, 8 Sept 1603.

<sup>447</sup> Loomie, 'Toleration', pp. 30, 33. For a concise summary of these negotiations, see: Duerloo, *Dynasty*, pp. 173–175.

<sup>448</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty*, p. 175; Porfirio Sanz Camañes, '3. Las paces con Inglaterra', in Martínez Millán and Visceglia (eds.), *La Monarquía*, pp. 1326–1341; Alain Wijffels, 'The Anglo-Spanish Peace Treaty of 1604: a rehearsal for Belgian diplomats', in Lesaffer (ed.), *Twelve Years*, pp. 69–86.

approve of such great friendship with heretics'.<sup>449</sup> Presumably, this was the pope's official position: Clement VIII did not want to be seen as openly endorsing peace between a Catholic and a 'heretical' ruler. Privately, however, Clement VIII approved of the peace. As we have seen in the introduction to this part of the thesis, the *avvisi* reported that, at night and alone, the pontiff went to thank God for the peace in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore.<sup>450</sup> Moreover, Clement VIII expressed his joy at the Anglo-Spanish peace in a letter to the nuncio at the Spanish court.<sup>451</sup> And what was the pope's opinion about the fact that Spain had not secured liberty of conscience for the English Catholics as a condition of peace?

Based on a letter from the Spanish king to the new Spanish ambassador in Rome, Juan Fernández Pacheco, the marquis of Villena and duke of Escalona (1563–1615),<sup>452</sup> Albert J. Loomie wrote that Philip III resented that 'the papacy' had expressed its astonishment to the ambassador 'that the Catholic King had done nothing to help the persecuted Catholics'.<sup>453</sup> As a matter of fact, however, the ambassador simply had written that Cardinal Aldobrandini had recommended that the constable should insist on an improvement for the Catholics before he signed the peace treaty. Escalona remarked that the pope had never mentioned to him that this was necessary. He also observed that 'this arrow' did not come from Aldobrandini's 'quiver' but from the 'crossbow' of the French king who thus tried to prevent the conclusion of peace under the guise of concern for religion.<sup>454</sup>

Indeed, Clement VIII did not only refrain from exhorting the Spanish king to exact securities for the English Catholics from James VI/I but even told Philip III that there was no need to insist on toleration for the Catholics as a condition for peace. Clement VIII was, as John C. Thewlis observed, 'manifestly more anxious for peace than for the extortion of large concessions from the English government'.<sup>455</sup> In mid-August, the constable of Castile could not refrain from remarking resentfully that he was startled 'that the Pope himself, whose principal concern should be this very matter, is not only silent but advising that the peace conference must not be broken off since nothing can be done in the matter of religion'.<sup>456</sup> At the Spanish Council of State, the pope had a defender in the duke of Sessa who, as the former ambassador in Rome, could claim to know the intentions of the pontiff

<sup>449</sup> Original quoted in: Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIV, p. 71 (footnote 1).

<sup>450</sup> BAV, *Urb. Lat.*, 1072 (2), f. 425r: 'Avvisi di Roma', 18 Aug 1604.

<sup>451</sup> Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIV, p. 71 (footnote 1).

<sup>452</sup> For biographical details on the duke of Escalona, see: Giordano (ed.), *Istruzioni di Filippo III*, pp. LXI–LXIV.

<sup>453</sup> Loomie, 'Toleration', pp. 39–40. For the letter see: AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 403: Philip III to Escalona, 26 Nov 1604.

<sup>454</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 978, no f.: Escalona to Philip III, 26 Aug 1604.

<sup>455</sup> Thewlis, *Peace*, p. 222.

<sup>456</sup> Translated and quoted in: Loomie, 'Toleration', p. 34.

better than anyone else at the court.

In Sessa's opinion, Clement VIII wanted to relieve the king's conscience and help him out of a dilemma: the pope knew that Philip III saw himself forced to conclude peace with England even if he could not obtain toleration for the English Catholics.<sup>457</sup> The former ambassador also thought that Clement VIII truly believed 'that with peace and the passage of time the Catholic party will be augmented whereas war places them in the gravest jeopardy'.<sup>458</sup> Sessa, however, also emphasised that he himself was of the opinion that Spain had to take the English Catholics into account in the peace negotiations.

Philip III had promised to help the Catholics in England and they had remained firm in their devotion to him, relying on the king's protection and support even though this signified that they had to suffer in their native kingdom.<sup>459</sup> Sessa warned Philip III against forsaking the Catholics in England now that the English crown was no longer up for grabs. Otherwise, the king would confirm Elizabeth I's assertion that the war of Philip II and Philip III against England was 'not based on zeal for religion but only on self-interest'.<sup>460</sup> Sessa was convinced that the Spanish king would lose the trust of the English Catholics and would make them despair; Philip III would set a bad example which would have negative consequences for Spain from now onwards. Sessa therefore did not wish the king to conclude peace with England unless he could also obtain something in favour of the English Catholics.<sup>461</sup>

Sessa's advice shows that Philip III needed to prove that the Spanish monarchs had always acted in the interest of religion and that they had not been following a policy of reason of state which only aimed at the aggrandisement of Spain's power. A seemingly promising option for the Spanish to furnish such a proof was to pay for the better treatment of the English Catholics: in 1603 and 1604, there circulated ideas at the Spanish, English and archducal courts that Spain could pay for the remission of the recusancy fines instead of securing liberty of conscience for James VI/I's Catholic subjects in the peace treaty. The pope dismissed any such plans already in September 1603 and remained steadfast in this decision. It was, in the pope's opinion, 'unworthy and scandalous to buy toleration of a belief that could come, by its own teaching, only from God's blessing'.<sup>462</sup>

The courts in Spain and in Rome clearly agreed that an improvement for the English

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<sup>457</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 842, f. 88: consulta, 22 June 1604.

<sup>458</sup> Translated and quoted in: Albert J. Loomie, 'The armadas and the Catholics of England', *The Catholic Historical Review*, 59 (1973), p. 403.

<sup>459</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 842, f. 88: consulta, 22 June 1604.

<sup>460</sup> Translated and quoted in: Loomie, 'The armadas', p. 403.

<sup>461</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 842, f. 88: consulta, 22 June 1604.

<sup>462</sup> Loomie, 'Toleration', pp. 19, 21, 25, 32–33; Hicks, 'The embassy ... Part II', pp. 198–201.

Catholics had to be the goal of Spain's England policy. The timeframe in which the two courts were thinking however, differed. For the Spanish, peace with the Protestant king of England had to entail some specific alleviation for the English Catholics which allowed Spain to prove that its policies were led by religious zeal, not by political ambition. Spain therefore intended to insist on an improvement for the Catholics in England in the short-term. For Clement, on the other hand, peace between the Catholic king of Spain and the Protestant King James VI/I was a means to an end: he hoped that the Anglo-Spanish peace would favour stability in England and lead to an improvement for the Catholic religion in the long-term.

In order to convince Spain to make peace, the pontiff reminded the Spanish king of his military weakness which caused resentment at the Spanish court in summer 1603. At the same time, Clement VIII's resolution to treat James VI/I with kindness in the hope that this would encourage his conversion caused further resentment in Spain. The Spanish felt that Clement VIII, as the head of the Roman Catholic Church, had to watch more zealously over the protection of the Catholic religion and had to put pressure on James VI/I. To its disappointment, the Spanish court had to learn that the pope displayed the same leniency towards the 'heretical' ruler in England as he had shown towards Henry IV whose conversion the Spanish regarded as feigned. Thus the dissatisfaction in Spain with the pope in 1603 and 1604 was a result of differing views on the timeframe within which the common goal should be achieved and of the opinion in Spain that the pope recommended peace for the wrong reasons: Spain's lack of military strength and an undue leniency of Clement VIII towards a 'heretic'.

During the preliminary peace talks in 1599 and 1600, the pope had insisted that peace with the 'heretical' queen of England had to benefit the Catholic cause. In 1604, on the other hand, Clement VIII no longer considered immediate securities for the Catholics as an absolute condition for Spain to make peace with a 'heretical' ruler. The pope thus had changed his strategy with Elizabeth I's death or, rather, with James VI/I's accession. Clement VIII did not think that Spain would be able to win the war against the English and hoped that peace, if necessary concluded without any religious securities for the English Catholics, would favour the Catholic cause in the long-term. In the meantime, the pontiff wished to see Philip III's forces freed for the war against the Ottomans.

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Despite his exhortations to Philip III to make peace with James VI/I and despite all his

assurances of good will towards the English king, Clement VIII did not simply trust that King James would convert for sure once that he would have obtained the English crown. Several times, between early 1601 and the death of Elizabeth I, the pontiff tried to sound out whether Philip III and Henry IV would install a Catholic candidate on the English throne who was agreeable to both kings.

In his diplomatic endeavours, the pope tried to combine several objectives. As the head of an Italian state, Clement VIII attempted to avoid an increase of the Spanish sphere of influence. As the head of the Aldobrandini family, the pontiff hoped to obtain the English throne for the House of Parma to whom the Aldobrandini were related: this would also have promoted the prestige of Clement VIII's own family. As the head of the Catholic Church, the pope aimed to return England to the obedience of the Holy See. As the head of Christendom and *padre comune*, most importantly, Clement meant to protect the Catholic faith by preserving peace between Spain and France: another war in Christendom would only have furthered the interests of the advancing Ottomans.

Chapter 3 has shown that in 1599 and 1600, during the preliminary negotiations which led to the fruitless peace talks in Boulogne-sur-Mer, the Holy See relentlessly exhorted the archdukes not to neglect the interest of religion in the peace negotiations with Elizabeth I. In 1604, on the other hand, Clement VIII told Philip III that, if necessary, he could make peace with the new Protestant king of England at any cost. The reason for the change in Clement VIII's attitude was that the excommunicated Elizabeth I had died in 1603 and the pope believed that the new monarch could be convinced to treat his Catholic subjects more favourably and that it might even be possible to convert him at some point. The pope thus did not insist that peace agreements with 'heretics' had to contain articles which favoured the Catholic cause in Protestant lands if he considered that advantages for the Catholic Church possibly might arise later from peaceful relations and contacts with a 'heretical' ruler.

The pontiff expected that an Anglo-Spanish peace would make James stop suspecting that his Catholic subjects might try to dethrone him with Spanish support. Clement hoped that, instead, peacetime would induce the king to start favouring the English Catholics and to consider a conversion more seriously. The pope therefore decided to treat Spain's peace with James VI/I as a political means to a religious end in the long-term, hoping that the 'quiete publica' would ultimately also allow the 'true faith' to triumph in England. In the short-term, he wished to preserve peace between Spain and France as well as to relieve Philip III of a costly war in the hope that this would allow the Spanish king to turn his military forces against the Sublime Porte. For these reasons, the pope exhorted the Spanish

king to make peace with the Protestant on the English throne. As we have seen, Clement would not make peace between Protestant and Catholic powers in formal peace negotiations, in particular since this would have signified that the Holy See formally and openly recognised Protestants as sovereign princes even though they were, according to canon law, excommunicated *eo ipso* by their adherence to heresy and therefore unable to fulfil any public office. Yet, this chapter has shown that Clement VIII deemed that, in the interest of the Catholic religion in England and for the defence of Christendom against the Ottomans, he could and should recommend to a Catholic ruler to make peace with a 'heretical' ruler.

In principle, the Holy See and the Spanish court both envisaged working for the Catholic cause in England. However, they differed in their strategies. The Spanish court considered flexing its muscles in order to twist James VI/I's arm during peace negotiations: by a show of military power, Spain wished to force the king into granting his Catholic subjects the right to practise their religion. Clement VIII's attempts to win James VI/I for the Catholic faith by mildness, on the other hand, caused dissatisfaction among the Spanish. The king and his councillors wished to defend Spain's reputation as a military and Catholic power. The Spanish felt that they needed to prove that Philip II and Philip III had always waged war against confessional enemies for the protection of the Catholic religion in Christendom rather than for political gain. The Spanish king and his advisers also wanted to be seen as negotiating peace in order to help the English Catholics, not solely because Spain needed peace with England. The Spanish therefore intended to obtain securities for the Catholics in England already in the short-term and wished the pope to support their efforts more decisively.

As the head of the Roman Catholic Church, Clement VIII did not achieve the goal of his England-policy: King James VI/I and his kingdoms did not return to the fold of the Roman Catholic Church. On the other hand, the pope saw his hopes fulfilled in his role as the spiritual head of the *respublica christiana* who had to care for peace in Christendom and for the war against the Ottomans. Spain did not try to dethrone King James after his accession and thus also did not risk another war with France. Moreover, the Anglo-Spanish peace freed some of Spain's resources, just as Clement VIII had expected, for the anti-Ottoman war.

In December 1604, Clement VIII intended to exhort Philip III to embark on an enterprise against the Ottomans or to support Emperor Rudolf II financially and militarily



now that peace with England had relieved Spain of a major nuisance.<sup>463</sup> The king, alerted by the news that everybody in Prague, except for the emperor, was in favour of peace with the Ottomans, did not need any exhortation: in December Philip III approved to support the emperor with the largest sum of money (500,000 ducats) which Spain granted in the entire thirteen years of Rudolf II's war against the Sublime Porte, followed by further subsidies in 1605.<sup>464</sup> Moreover, 'for the first time since 1585', the Anglo-Spanish peace allowed the king of Spain to dedicate himself fully to the war against the United Dutch Provinces.<sup>465</sup> The last chapter in this part of the thesis concentrates on this war of the Spanish Habsburgs in the Low Countries and will analyse how Clement VIII responded to expectations that he would promote a reconciliation of Catholic sovereigns with their rebelling, 'heretical' subjects.

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<sup>463</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, pp. 772; Niederkorn, *Mächte*, pp. 246–247.

<sup>464</sup> Niederkorn, *Mächte*, pp. 94, 249–250; Poumarède, *Croisade*, pp. 285–286.

<sup>465</sup> Parker, *Grand Strategy*, p. 280.

## Clement VIII and the pacification of the Low Countries (1598–1605)

On 10 June 1598, Ernest of Bavaria, the prince–elector–archbishop of Cologne, congratulated Clement VIII for the successful reintegration of Ferrara into the Papal States, expressed his joy over the recuperation of Győr from the Ottomans and thanked Clement VIII as the author of the Peace of Vervins.<sup>466</sup> As we have seen in the General Introduction, the devolution of Ferrara, the Peace of Vervins and the fall of Győr, together with the false news of the capture of Buda from the Ottomans, induced Clement VIII to declare that 1598 had been 'the year of miracles'. So far, this thesis has shown that Clement VIII was particularly dedicated to fulfilling his duties as the spiritual head of Christendom who had to take care of peace in the Latin West and of the war against the Ottomans.

The pope's desire to comply with his duties as *padre comune* and spiritual leader of Christendom was a driving factor in the pope's England policy. It influenced the pope in his decision to explore whether Spain and France would agree on installing a Catholic claimant on the English throne up to 1603 and, subsequently, the anti-Ottoman war also motivated the pontiff to exhort a Catholic prince, Philip III, to make peace with a Protestant ruler, James VI/I. Clearly, unlike canonist thinkers such as Alfonso de Castro, the pope did not think that Catholic princes had a duty to defend the Catholic cause in religious wars against 'heretical' rulers, even though, according to canon law, they had been automatically deprived of their right to rule by their adherence to heresy. In the case of James VI/I, the pope did not even request that the Anglo-Spanish peace had to contain religious concessions for the English Catholics. Arguably, the pope's decision to refrain from insisting that this transconfessional agreement immediately had to lead to an advantage for the Catholic religion was driven by the pontiff's hope that King James would lessen the lot of the English Catholics and maybe even convert in the long term.

This chapter moves the focus away from England to the Low Countries in order to

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<sup>466</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 112c.d., f. 39r: Ernest of Bavaria to Clement VIII, 10 June 1598. The letter is partially transcribed in: *Frangipani*, vol. II, p. 366 (footnote 1).

consider whether Clement VIII's leniency towards James VI/I was an exception indeed and whether the pope exhorted the Catholic Spanish Habsburgs to persist in their war against the confessional enemy in the Low Countries. The pontiff regarded the Dutch as rebelling subjects of the Spanish Habsburgs: this chapter explores whether the pope insisted that Catholic rulers always had the duty to extirpate heresy within their jurisdiction by all possible means or whether they could even sign agreements with their 'heretical' subjects which did not contain any advantages for the Catholic Church. The remaining chapters in this thesis will demonstrate that Clement VIII's concern for the war against the Sublime Porte also affected his decision whether or not he should actively promote a reconciliation between Catholic rulers and their rebelling 'heretical' subjects. Thus, this thesis continues to engage with Burkhardt's observation that the early modern papacy never made peace between Catholic and Protestant (sovereign) powers by formal diplomatic intervention and explores further under which circumstances Clement deemed it appropriate to use his papal authority for favouring peace across confessional boundaries.

In 2011, José Eloy Hortal Muñoz argued that Clement VIII refused to act as an intermediary between Philip II and the Dutch 'rebels' after the Peace of Vervins in 1598. The pope based his refusal on the opinion that such negotiations would not promote the Catholic cause, given that the Dutch were and would always remain 'heretics'. According to Hortal Muñoz, the pope's argument was only a pretext and, in reality, Clement VIII 'wished that the power of the Spanish monarchy would be menaced by other enemies since a universal peace would have entailed that Philip II would [be able to] regroup his forces'.<sup>467</sup> The feeling of Clement VIII's Spanish contemporaries that the Aldobrandini pope harboured anti-Spanish sentiments clearly resonates in Hortal Muñoz's conclusion. So far, this thesis has shown that, indeed, Clement absolved Henry of Navarre against the will of Spain, that this act undermined Spain's pretensions to the French throne and that it helped curbing the Spanish hegemony in Italy and in Christendom more generally in the long-term. We have, however, also seen that Clement refused to admit Protestant powers to the papal peace negotiations in Vervins. This indicates that, against Hortal Muñoz's assertion, the pope's refusal to mediate between the Catholic king of Spain and the Calvinist United Provinces of the Netherlands might not have been a mere excuse motivated simply by the pontiff's anti-Spanish feelings: at the time, Clement VIII most likely did not want to favour the cause of 'heretics' by promoting peace between Catholic and Protestant powers.

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<sup>467</sup> José Eloy Hortal Muñoz, 'La lucha contra la *Monarchia Universalis* de Felipe II: la modificación de la política de la Santa Sede en Flandes y Francia respecto a la Monarquía Hispana a finales del siglo XVI', *Hispania: Revista española de historia*, 71 (2011), p. 85.

Hortal Muñoz's analysis of Clement VIII's anti-Spanish considerations in his Flanders and France policy stops with the peace of Vervins in 1598.<sup>468</sup> This chapter, by contrast, concentrates on Clement VIII's attitude towards the pacification of the Low Countries from the period after the peace of Vervins to the end of his pontificate.<sup>469</sup> The first subchapter discusses what role other Catholic princes expected the pope to fulfil in the war of the Spanish Habsburgs with their Dutch 'rebels' after the Peace of Vervins and how the pontiff responded to such expectations. The second subchapter explains why the pope subsequently altered his attitude and how other Catholic princes responded to the pope's new position. The last subchapter analyses what course of action Clement VIII recommended the Spanish king to take in the war against the United Provinces and by which diplomatic channels the pontiff tried to support Philip III's goal to resubmit the Dutch to Habsburg rule. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that, contrary to Hortal Muñoz's assertion, Clement VIII did not wish to see Spain's armed forces embroiled in continuous warfare in the Low Countries. This chapter also shows that Clement's efforts to make peace among Catholic rulers induced other Catholic princes to expect that the Aldobrandini pontiff would also intervene in confessional conflicts between Catholic sovereigns and their 'heretical', rebelling subjects and demonstrates that, ultimately, the pope complied with such expectations.

### **6.1. The pope as promoter of the pacification of Flanders? (1598)**

In August 1596, Cardinal Ludovico Madruzzo (1532–1600), the cardinal–protector of the Spanish and German nations, addressed Pope Clement VIII on the precarious state of the Catholic religion in the German lands. The cardinal underlined that the Catholic religion in this part of Christendom had suffered great damage ever since the outbreak of the war in Flanders. According to Madruzzo, the 'heretics' had lost their former respect for the emperor and his authority because Philip II could no longer back him with Spanish forces.<sup>470</sup> The cardinal's message was clear: heresy would continue to spread in the Holy Roman Empire for as long as Spain remained at war with the United Provinces. The conflict in the Low Countries had to cease so that Emperor Rudolf II would be able to regain control over all his subjects in the empire, if necessary with Spain's financial and

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<sup>468</sup> Ibid.

<sup>469</sup> For recent studies on the run-up to the Twelve Years Truce in 1609, see: Esteban Estríngana, 'Preparing the ground', *passim*; Bram De Ridder and Violet Soen, 'The Act of Cession, the 1598 and 1600 States General in Brussels and the peace negotiations during the Dutch Revolt', in Lesaffer (ed.), *Twelve Years*, pp. 48–68; Duerloo, *Dynasty*, pp. 103–142, 187–233; Alicia Esteban Estríngana, 'Haciendo rostro a la fortuna: guerra, paz y soberanía en los Países Bajos, 1590–1621', in García García (ed.), *Tiempo de paces*, pp. 77–123; Sanz Camañes, 'España', pp. 122–133.

<sup>470</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 967, f. 149: Sessa to Philip II, 27 Aug 1596.

military support. Obtaining the pacification of Flanders, however, was difficult. This subchapter explains that many of Clement VIII's contemporaries considered the Franco-Spanish war a major hindrance to any rapprochement between the Habsburgs and the Dutch. It also shows that the success of the pope as a peacemaker between the Catholic crowns of Spain and France led to expectations that he would subsequently promote the reconciliation of the Catholic Habsburgs with the 'heretics' in the United Provinces.

As the introduction to this part summarised, Philip II was heavily engaged in a resource-intensive war in the Low Countries in the second half of the sixteenth century: the king tried to resubmit the Dutch, whom he regarded as 'rebels' and 'heretics', to Spanish rule. At the latest Spain's bankruptcy in 1596 made Philip II realise that he could not sustain war with France, England and the United Provinces for much longer. In 1597 Philip II therefore decided to cede the sovereignty over the Low Countries to his daughter Isabella and his nephew, Cardinal-Archduke Albert of Austria, the governor-general of Flanders. The king hoped that the cession would induce the Dutch provinces to submit themselves to the new sovereigns of the Low Countries.<sup>471</sup>

In late 1597, the *Conseil Privé* in Brussels discussed Philip II's announcement that he intended to cede the Low Countries to Albert and Isabella in order to render rest and tranquillity to Flanders. The members of the *Conseil Privé* agreed with Philip II that the cessation might be a good means to restore quietude and tranquillity in Flanders. The councillors, however, also asked Philip II to assist them in obtaining a good peace with all their neighbours and to free Flanders from the internal war against the Dutch rebels as well as from the external war with France and England.<sup>472</sup> Similarly, Cardinal Madruzzo believed that many people were convinced that Philip II would not be able to make the Dutch rebels resubmit to Habsburg rule for as long as he was simultaneously embroiled in a war against Henry IV and Elizabeth I.<sup>473</sup> Cardinal Aldobrandini and the nuncio in Brussels shared this opinion.

In September 1597, the military success of the Dutch army under the guidance of Maurice of Nassau, prince of Orange and captain-general of the United Provinces (1567–1625), forced Cardinal-Nephew Pietro Aldobrandini to use calculated optimism. The pope's nephew commented that Nassau's capture of Rheinberg (in modern-day North Rhine-Westphalia) in summer 1597 should accelerate the peace process between Spain and France since this would subsequently allow Cardinal-Archduke Albert to concentrate his

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<sup>471</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty*, p. 52. See also: Rafael Valladares, 'Decid adiós a Flandes: la Monarquía Hispánica y el problema de los Países Bajos', in Thomas and Duerloo (eds.), *Albert and Isabella*, pp. 47–53.

<sup>472</sup> AGR, *Audience, Lettres Missives*, 1842/3, no f.: 'Conseil Privé' in Brussels to Philip II, 12 Dec 1597.

<sup>473</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 969, f. 136: 'Discurso del Cardenal Madruzzo sobre la Succession del Imperio'. Sent with: *ibid.*, f. 134: Sessa to Philip II, 28 Sept 1597.

divided forces and all his efforts on the war against the Dutch rebels.<sup>474</sup> In January 1598, the nuncio in Flanders, Ottavio Mirto Frangipani, in turn, emphasised in a letter to Aldobrandini that 'the public and private well-being' of the Low Countries depended on the successful conclusion of the papal peace negotiations between Henry IV and Philip II. The nuncio deemed that daily experience showed that merely separating the Low Countries from Spanish rule would not be enough for resolving the troubles in Flanders unless France and Spain signed a peace treaty. In Frangipani's opinion such a peace was a precondition for liberating the Low Countries from the misery of war.<sup>475</sup>

Clearly, contemporaries regarded the Franco-Spanish war as a major obstacle to the pacification of Flanders. Henry IV would continue to support his Dutch allies in their rebellion against Spain for as long as he was at war with Philip II; at the same time, Spanish forces, which were needed in the Low Countries, would remain engaged in the Franco-Spanish war. All hopes on the re-establishment of Habsburg rule and on the restoration of Catholicism in the whole Low Countries therefore rested on a positive outcome of the Franco-Spanish peace negotiations in Vervins. These hopes were also shared by Ernest of Bavaria, the prince–elector–archbishop of Cologne, who had a vested interest in the pacification of Flanders.

Ernest of Bavaria's sway as archbishop of Cologne, prince–bishop of Münster and Liège and as prince–abbot of the double monastery of Stavelot and Malmedy was directly affected by the on-going war between the Spanish and the Dutch. Ernest's territories in the Lower Rhineland bordered with the Low Countries and were exposed to damages inflicted on them by incursions of the armed forces from both camps.<sup>476</sup> As the archbishop remarked in a letter to Clement VIII, the war in Flanders destabilised the entire region to such a degree that he was not able to exert his rule in all his dominions in Westphalia and the Rhineland.<sup>477</sup> The archbishop of Cologne concurred with the opinion in Brussels and Rome that Flanders could only be pacified if Spain and France settled their differences and, in early 1598, he hoped to have detected some signs of a coming pacification of Christendom.

In February 1598, Ernest of Bavaria congratulated the pope for the successful reintegration of the duchy of Ferrara into the Papal States and expressed his hope that the re-established harmony in Italy would be a prelude or a 'small foretaste' for an ensuing universal peace. The archbishop wished that the pope would employ his usual 'prudence and authority' for ending the Franco-Spanish war so that 'the agitated sword of the Lord

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<sup>474</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. I, pp. 96–97.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II, pp. 286–287.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287. See also: Duerloo, 'Der ehrgeizige Jüngste', p. 113.

<sup>477</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 112c.d., f. 29v: Ernest of Bavaria to Clement VIII, 18 Feb 1598. The letter is partially edited in: *Frangipani*, vol. II, p. 293 (footnote 1).

would calm down' and that it could be 'returned to its sheath, cooled down and silenced' again.<sup>478</sup> When the archbishop learnt that Archduke Albert had sent envoys to Vervins for peace talks but that he still also mistrusted Henry IV's sincerity, Ernest decided that it was time for him to repair to Brussels in person and to talk to Albert.<sup>479</sup> The two cousins, who were united by fondness for each other and who shared political interests, did not only discuss the on-going papal peace negotiations between Spain and France but also the possibility of peace with the rebelling United Provinces.<sup>480</sup> The Franco-Spanish peace process clearly was of utmost importance to Ernest who expected that it would subsequently benefit the pacification of Flanders and thus also advance the interest of his territories. The conclusion of the peace between Spain and France under papal auspices in Vervins in May 1598 therefore aroused high hopes in the elector.

As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, on 10 June, the elector again congratulated Clement VIII for the integration of Ferrara into the Papal States and expressed his joy over the fall of Győr before he thanked Clement VIII as the author of the Peace of Vervins. Ernest then explained to the pope that he had always thought of Flanders 'as a boat next to the great ship of the French and the Spanish': when a wave moved the ship, the boat rocked as well but once the ship was at rest again, the boat could easily be calmed down too. Seeing that his hope on the Franco-Spanish peace had been fulfilled, the archbishop now had another, even greater expectation. Spain was still at war with the English and the Dutch but, according to Ernest, everybody wished that the pope would embrace this matter with his 'prudence, understanding kindness, prayers and tears' so that there would soon be peace in Europe and all heresy could finally be extinguished.<sup>481</sup>

The epistle reveals that the archbishop of Cologne hoped that Clement VIII would continue to dedicate himself to peace and, as the spiritual head of Christendom, to pacify the whole of Europe. Ernest implied that peace in Christendom would allow the Catholic religion to triumph over heresy, which fed on war and dissent. The elector thus tried to convince the pope that he should temporarily prioritise political exigencies over religious interests because, ultimately, peace and stability in the Low Countries would work in favour of the Catholic Church too. Ernest of Bavaria clearly expected that, in the interest of the Catholic religion, Clement would approve of peace across confessional boundaries. Chapter 3 discussed that, also in June 1598, unnamed people at the papal court thought that the pope might be considering making peace between the 'heretical' English queen and the

<sup>478</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 112c.d., ff. 29v–30r: Ernest of Bavaria to Clement VIII, 18 Feb 1598.

<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 30r.

<sup>480</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. I, p. 134 (footnote 1). For the cordial relations between the two cousins, see: Duerloo, 'Der ehrgeizige Jüngste', p. 114.

<sup>481</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 112c.d., f. 39r–v: Ernest of Bavaria to Clement VIII, 10 June 1598.

Catholic Spanish king. The archbishop, on the other hand, did not expect Clement VIII to intervene directly between the Catholic Habsburgs and their Calvinist 'rebels'. Instead, Ernest himself planned to contribute towards the pacification of Flanders and merely requested Clement VIII to assist him.

In secret, Ernest of Bavaria intended to convince the leaders on both sides that they should make peace and he was persuaded that there had never been better prospects than at that moment of time. With the Franco-Spanish peace, the Dutch had lost their French ally in the war against the Habsburg enemy. According to the archbishop of Cologne, the Dutch were wavering and restless now that they had to fight the enemy without French support. Therefore Ernest believed that they had to be persuaded to make peace before they found courage again. The archbishop had learnt that Emperor Rudolf II considered sending an embassy to the Dutch and Ernest wished Clement VIII to exhort the emperor to dispatch envoys indeed. Otherwise, an excellent opportunity to make peace would elapse for sure. Towards the end of the letter, the prince–elector–archbishop stressed once more how much he longed for universal peace.<sup>482</sup> Ernest of Bavaria thus tried to appeal to Clement's sense of duty to care, as the supreme peacemaker of Christendom, for universal peace too.

In order to increase the chances that the pope would receive his letter with goodwill, the archbishop also contacted the Cardinal–Nephew San Giorgio, Cinzio Passeri Aldobrandini, who was in charge of the nunciatures of Cologne and of the imperial court.<sup>483</sup> In his letter to San Giorgio, Ernest also expressed his joy over the Franco-Spanish peace, achieved by papal peacemakers in Vervins. The 'miserable state' of the Catholic Church in Flanders, the archbishop of Cologne continued, required the pope and his 'paternal heart' to apply the 'same medicine' to the pacification of the Low Countries.<sup>484</sup> In other words, an agreement between the Dutch and the Spanish Habsburgs had to be found and Ernest hoped that Clement VIII would contribute towards the conclusion of such an agreement for the sake of the Catholic religion in the Low Countries and in the archbishop's dominions.

It is necessary to emphasise that the ultimate goal of the archbishop was not a peaceful coexistence of the Calvinist United Provinces with the Catholic rulers of the Spanish Netherlands and the king of Spain. Ernest had a reconciliation of 'the Hollanders and their allied provinces with the Church and their ruler' in mind.<sup>485</sup> Clearly, Ernest of Bavaria hoped that the Dutch would eventually resubmit themselves to the Catholic Church

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<sup>482</sup> Ibid.

<sup>483</sup> Jaitner, 'Il nepotismo', p. 61.

<sup>484</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 112c.d., f. 12r: Ernest of Bavaria to San Giorgio, 10 June 1598. The letter is only mentioned in: *Frangipani*, vol. II, p. 366 (footnote 1).

<sup>485</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 112c.d., f. 12r: Ernest of Bavaria to San Giorgio, 10 June 1598.



and the Habsburgs. The archbishop also believed that once the Low Countries were pacified, soldiers would become available for the war against the Ottomans.<sup>486</sup> Given Clement VIII's continuous efforts to unite Catholic Christendom in a defensive and offensive war against the advancing Ottomans, this was certainly a well-chosen argument. Ernest also pointed out that such a reconciliation would soon favour the Catholic faith in the United Provinces and that many Catholics who had to bear the 'cross of enslavement by heretics' in these provinces would be liberated from their 'detestable yoke inflicted on them by inferior men and minds'.<sup>487</sup>

As in the letter to the pope, Ernest explained that now, it seemed, a good opportunity was at hand. The Dutch were deeply afflicted because they saw themselves deserted and treated with contempt by the French king. Was this not the ideal moment to work for concord? Referring again to the emperor's intention to send an embassy to the United Provinces, the archbishop thought that Rudolf II should send envoys indeed and that he should do so in the name of the entire Holy Roman Empire. Ernest did not believe that another, equally convenient opportunity with a chance of success would occur again. The archbishop also tried to flatter the pope's nephew, saying that the immense care and solicitude with which Cardinal San Giorgio dedicated himself to the affairs in Germany had not remained concealed from him. Therefore, the archbishop concluded, he did not believe that it was necessary to stress how important it was that the cardinal considered carefully whether any advantage were to be expected if the pope encouraged the emperor to act.<sup>488</sup>

The two letters of the elector show that the peace of Vervins increased the reputation of the papacy as a peacemaking force. The letters also highlight that Clement VIII's achievements as a peacemaker and his demonstrative dedication to peace could further expectations of another success. At the same time, another prince, in this instance the Catholic Ernest of Bavaria, could exploit this reputation and image of the pontiff as a prince dedicated to peace and to the war against the Ottomans in order to pressure Clement VIII for further action. The particular dedication of the Aldobrandini pope to his duties as the spiritual head of Christendom provided the elector with a basis upon which he could found an appeal to the pontiff to promote a cross-confessional agreement for the eventual extirpation of heresy within and for the destruction of the 'infidels' without the Latin West. The pope's duties as the spiritual leader of Christendom therefore could be used as a rhetorical device in international diplomacy for discussing peace, including peace with the confessional enemy. The expectations of the prince–elector–archbishop, however, did not

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<sup>486</sup> Ibid.

<sup>487</sup> Ibid.

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

go as far as to requesting of Clement VIII a direct papal intervention between the Spanish Habsburgs and the Dutch 'rebels' in his role as supreme peacemaker. The elector simply considered the pope as an appropriate means to exert influence over the emperor and thus to advance the pacification of Flanders indirectly by his authority.

On 14 August 1598, the archbishop of Cologne contacted Cardinal San Giorgio again. He referred to the congratulatory letter for Clement VIII which he had written on the subject of the Franco-Spanish peace. Ernest also explained that in this letter he had implored the pontiff to use his authority for exhorting the emperor to send an embassy to the United Provinces who were waging war against God and their prince but whose prospect of success had become uncertain due to the reconciliation of Henry IV with Philip II. As far as the prince–elector–archbishop was aware, the pope had not yet taken any action and since Clement VIII had not replied to his letter he could not refrain from writing again. After all, it seemed that the wellbeing of the whole of Europe depended upon this matter. Ernest therefore beseeched Cinzio Aldobrandini to dedicate himself to this affair and the archbishop would make sure that everybody knew that nobody was more devoted to the cardinal than Ernest himself.<sup>489</sup> Ernest of Bavaria was not the only ruler with expectations that Clement VIII would use his authority with the emperor to work for the pacification of the Low Countries.

In early August 1598, the nuncio in Flanders related that Archduke Albert desired to see peace with the Dutch promoted by the emperor. The archduke hoped that the authority of the emperor would no longer encounter the old obstacles now that he, Albert, rather than the Spanish king, was the lord of the Low Countries. However, the nuncio wrote, the archduke would be grateful if the emperor decided to intervene at the instance of the pope; Albert suspected that the emperor would not act by himself or upon the archduke's request. He feared that Rudolf II might refrain from doing a deed which would benefit the universal good simply out of jealousy that Albert had ended up marrying the infanta and had received the Low Countries as a dowry.<sup>490</sup> The archduke's suspicion derived from the fact that, earlier in his reign, Rudolf II had asked Philip II for the Netherlands as a dowry in protracted marriage talks; the would-be bride at the time was the same Infanta Isabella who, in the end, married Rudolf's brother, Archduke Albert, in 1598.<sup>491</sup> Like Ernest of Bavaria, Albert thus hoped that the pope would use his papal authority in order to make Rudolf II use his imperial authority among the Dutch, all in favour of a pacification of Flanders. At the papal court, however, the requests of the two cousins, Ernest and Albert, that the pope

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<sup>489</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 112c.d., f. 100r: Ernest of Bavaria to San Giorgio, 14 Aug 1598.

<sup>490</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. II, pp. 365–366.

<sup>491</sup> Duerloo, 'Der ehrgeizige Jüngste', p. 107.

would indirectly promote peaceful relations between the Spanish Habsburgs and the predominantly Calvinist United Provinces were not met with approval, at least not for the time being.

Already in late May 1598, the pontiff had addressed the Spanish ambassador in Rome, the duke of Sessa, on matters relating to the 'rebellious heretics', that is, the Dutch. Clement VIII explained that, 'since it was necessary to tolerate them somewhat [*'disimularles algo'*], he did not approve of this with his authority but would simply close his eyes'.<sup>492</sup> Clement VIII thus was aware that the Spanish Habsburg might need to come to terms with 'heretics' and thus to make concessions to the confessional enemy. Yet, the pope's declaration also indicates that he did not intend to take an active role in the promotion of the pacification of the Low Countries. This becomes even more evident from a letter of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini to the nuncio in Flanders.

In late August 1598, Cardinal Aldobrandini told Frangipani that Archduke Albert's idea that the emperor should promote peace between the Spanish Habsburgs and the Dutch at the request of Clement VIII needed 'mature deliberation'. The pope was not sure how such a peace could favour the Catholic religion and therefore also had reservations that there was a good enough reason for the pontiff to 'intervene with the pontifical authority' in this affair.<sup>493</sup> This preoccupation with the direct interest of the Catholic religion in a possible pacification of the Low Countries at the Holy See should not distort the wider picture: religion was not the main obstacle to a reunion of the United Provinces with the provinces which had remained loyal to Spain under the rule of the Archdukes Albert and Isabella as the new sovereigns of Flanders.

The Peace of Vervins and the Act of Cession of the Low Countries on 6 May 1598 were followed by a series of peace talks between the representatives of the States General ('parliament') of the provinces which had remained loyal to the Habsburgs and the rebelling States General of the United Provinces. These talks lasted up to 1600.<sup>494</sup> During these negotiations, the Dutch Provinces defended their objection to Habsburg rule as legitimate, while the States General ('parliament') of the Spanish Netherlands fortified their ties with the Habsburg dynasty. These peace talks did not fail due to religious differences but because the two sides disagreed on how the Low Countries should be ruled. The Dutch United Provinces insisted on self-government; the States General of the Spanish Netherlands, on the other hand, were willing to subscribe to a dynastic rule which foresaw

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<sup>492</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 970, no f.: Sessa to Philip II, 27 May 1598.

<sup>493</sup> *Frangipani*, vol. I, pp. 154–155.

<sup>494</sup> De Ridder and Soen, 'The Act of Cession, the 1598 and 1600 States General in Brussels', *passim*; Bram De Ridder, 'Benchmarking the past: politico-legal connotations of tradition, custom and common practice in the diplomacy of the Eighty Years War', *Dutch Crossings* (forthcoming).

only limited participation of the 'parliament' in the government of the Low Countries. Thus the provinces loyal to Spain primarily hoped on a form of government which promised political stability while the United Provinces feared further Habsburg oppression. The negotiations made both sides aware of their profoundly different positions and of the unlikely prospects for any agreement. As a consequence, Bram De Ridder argued, the States General of the two Netherlands withdrew themselves from discussions of the pacification and reunification of the Low Countries after 1600. This estrangement and self-absorption reinforced the process which led to the perennial division of the Low Countries after the Twelve Years Truce (1609) and the Peace of Westphalia (1648).<sup>495</sup>

## **6.2. The pope's attitude revisited (1600–1602)**

The previous subchapter highlighted that, in 1598, Clement VIII did not deem that he should use his authority as pope for promoting peace between the Spanish Habsburgs and the Dutch 'heretics' because he did not think that such a deed would directly benefit the Catholic religion. Over the course of the next four years, however, the pope's attitude changed. At the latest by 1602 the pontiff had decided to promote the pacification of Flanders with his papal authority: in March 1602, Clement VIII exhorted the emperor to dedicate himself to reconciling the Dutch and the Spanish Habsburgs.<sup>496</sup> This subchapter explains why the pope reconsidered his attitude and how this shift was perceived at the Spanish court and in Cologne. The aim of this subchapter is to show that, at times of necessity, the pontiff was willing to adjust his position and work for peace across confessional boundaries. One reason for the pope to change his stance was the inability of the Spanish Habsburgs to alter the course of the war in the Netherlands.

Geoffrey Parker observed that '[b]etween 1598 and 1604 every major campaign undertaken by the army of Flanders was jeopardized or prevented by the mutiny of a large body of troops'.<sup>497</sup> Clearly, the Peace of Vervins, which had ended the war with France and had freed Spanish resources for the war against the Dutch, was not followed by the hoped for military breakthrough in the Low Countries. In late December 1601, the Spanish Council of State therefore advised Philip III to reconsider Spain's strategy in the war against the English and the Dutch.<sup>498</sup> The prospects did not improve over the next year.

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<sup>495</sup> Bram De Ridder, 'De Akte van Afstand als pacificatiestrategie tijdens de Nederlandse Opstand (1597–1600)', *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Zuid-Nederlandse Maatschappij voor Taal-, Letterkunde en Geschiedenis*, 65 (2012), p. 221.

<sup>496</sup> ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 46, ff. 74r–75v (no. 80): Clement VIII to Rudolf II, 23 March 1602.

<sup>497</sup> Geoffrey Parker, *The Army of Flanders and the Spanish Road (1567–1659): The Logistics of Spanish Victory and Defeat in the Low Countries' Wars* (Cambridge, 1972), p. 249.

<sup>498</sup> Allen, *Philip III*, p. 77.

In early 1602, the Spanish armada had to surrender in Ireland where it was meant to support a rebellion of Irish earls against the English. Moreover, the army of Flanders remained entrenched in a siege at Ostend which Albert had started in summer 1601, while it had not been able to prevent Maurice of Nassau from invading Brabant. Furthermore, mutinies in the armed forces, which often had to fight for months without any pay, continued to undermine the military campaigns against the English and Dutch on a regular basis.<sup>499</sup> Therefore, already in January 1602, Archduke Albert started to sound out the options for an armistice with the United Provinces.<sup>500</sup> In November 1602, the Spanish Council of State counselled Philip III to reform the army of Flanders in the hope that it would subsequently have the necessary military power to force the Dutch enemies into negotiating a suspension of arms:<sup>501</sup> as we have seen, in late 1603 the king finally charged the constable of Castile with the task of reforming the army of Flanders on his way to the Anglo-Spanish peace conference in England (see Chapter 5.3.).

By 1602, Clement deemed that Spain did not have the military power to intervene in the English succession without the support of France (see also Chapter 4.1.). The pontiff's decision to exhort Emperor Rudolf II to work for a pacification of Flanders in March 1602 indicates that the course of the war in the north also made the pontiff doubt that the Spanish Habsburgs would be able to resubmit the United Provinces to Habsburg rule by means of force. Similarly, developments in Rudolf's anti-Ottoman war probably also induced the pope to reconsider his refusal to promote a reconciliation between the archdukes, Philip III and the Dutch.

In October 1600, the Ottoman army captured Canissa (Nagykanizsa in modern-day Hungary). This piece of news worried the pontiff deeply. Clement VIII regarded Canissa as a fortress of the utmost strategic importance, which, so far, had protected the German lands and, more importantly for the pope, the Italian peninsula from incursions of the Ottomans. He therefore, once more, asked several Catholic princes to help the imperial troops to reconquer Canissa and, in early 1601, decided to send a papal army of ten thousand men to Hungary. The enterprise cost the Papal States 498,000 scudi. This was an enormous sum; by way of comparison, the pope considered supporting Rudolf II's war against the Ottomans with 40,000 to 50,000 scudi for the entire year of 1600. The pontiff managed to collect the money by imposing new taxes, an increase of the debts of the Papal States and by contributions paid by twelve religious orders.<sup>502</sup> Clement VIII gave the command over

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<sup>499</sup> Ibid., pp. 77–80, 89; García García, *Pax*, pp. 39–42, 50–53.

<sup>500</sup> Esteban Estringana, 'Preparing the ground', p. 34.

<sup>501</sup> Allen, *Philip III*, pp. 93–95.

<sup>502</sup> Niederkorn, *Mächte*, pp. 78–79.

the troops to his temporal nephew, Gian Francesco Aldobrandini (1545–1601), who received a fourth of the entire sum (122,500 scudi) as gifts and loans.<sup>503</sup>

There are three points which need to be emphasised here. Firstly, the papal military expedition is a specific example which shows that Clement VIII's exhortations to peace in Christendom for the anti-Ottoman war were not mere rhetoric: the pontiff took his duties as the *padre comune* and spiritual head of Christendom extremely seriously. Secondly, Clement VIII's dedication to the anti-Ottoman war was not only fuelled by his zeal to fulfil his obligations as the spiritual head of Christendom but also by his concerns for the safety of the Italian peninsula and of the Papal States. As Peter Bartl asserted, the supreme pontiff ultimately regarded the Ottomans as a threat which was worse than the Protestants.<sup>504</sup> Thirdly, despite his worries for the security of Christendom and Italy, the Aldobrandini pontiff did not hesitate to (ab-)use the war against the Ottomans to look after the interests of his own family: at the expense of the Papal States and under the guise of the protection of Christendom and the Italian peninsula, Clement VIII diverted an enormous sum into the pockets of his temporal nephew.

Clement VIII's exhortation to the other Catholic princes to support Rudolf II's war against the Ottoman enemy was met with a Spanish promise of 200,000 ducats for the emperor's military expenses, a contribution of two thousand soldiers from the grand-duke of Florence and the personal participation of the duke of Mantua in the war. The whole military enterprise, however, ended in disaster and Gian Francesco Aldobrandini died of illness even before the papal troops could lay siege to Canissa in September 1601.<sup>505</sup> A discussion of the Spanish Council of State in early March 1602 reveals that the state of the war against the Ottomans was such that by November 1601 Philip III had feared that Rudolf II would envisage making peace with the Ottomans and therefore asked Clement VIII to dissuade the emperor from any such considerations and to assist him in the anti-Ottoman war.

In late December 1601, however, the pope replied to the Spanish ambassador that the resources of the Papal States were exhausted and therefore stressed that he would not be able to send 'either money or men' to Rudolf II. The pope did not want to recommend to the emperor that he should come to terms with the sultan because this would not be 'decent for a pope' to do; at the same time, he also did not want to exhort Rudolf II to continue the war since the pope felt that such an exhortation would have to be accompanied with some promise of help. Clement VIII therefore hoped that Philip III, without neglecting his own

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<sup>503</sup> Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>504</sup> Bartl, 'Türkenkrieg', p. 67.

<sup>505</sup> Niederkorn, *Mächte*, pp. 79–80; Poumarède, *Croisade*, p. 287.

war in Flanders, would support the emperor and thus animate him to remain steadfast in his war against the Sublime Porte.

The pope then addressed the state of affairs of Spain as a military power. Clement emphasised that he spoke freely in this matter because he did 'not only love [Philip III] as a spiritual son but also as if he were his own son' and that he only had the 'conservation and augmentation' of Philip III's crown in mind. After all, the Spanish king was still 'the most reliable defender of the Catholic Church'. Clement VIII reminded Philip III that however great the military forces of a prince were, they were often of little use if divided and engaged in diverse conflicts. Therefore, the Spanish king should consider that it was necessary first to finish one enterprise before a new one could be started. For as long as Philip III did not manage to end the rebellion in Flanders, which had 'now lasted for so long', he would not be able to provide the emperor with enough financial and military support which would convince Rudolf II to continue his war against the Ottomans.<sup>506</sup>

By late 1601, Clement VIII was evidently deeply worried that the emperor would make peace with the sultan and that Spain's war in the Low Countries did not allow Philip III to assist his Habsburg relatives in the war in Hungary. The pope's comment that the rebellion in Flanders had been going on for so long by now indicates that Clement doubted that the war against the Dutch could be won by a total military victory. The comment was also a clear hint that the pontiff wished the Spanish king to terminate the war with the Dutch in the hope that this would free Spain's forces for the war against the Ottomans. The military events in Flanders and in Hungary clearly induced the pope to revisit his initial rejection to promote the pacification of Flanders by his papal authority and, consequently, as mentioned, he decided to exhort Rudolf II to embrace the matter in a brief in March 1602. The pontiff also resolved to advise the Spanish king that he should use Rudolf's war in Hungary in order to move the emperor to reconcile the Spanish Habsburgs and the United Provinces.

In May 1602 Sessa reported to Philip III that Clement VIII had told him several times that the Spanish king should support the emperor in his anti-Ottoman war and that he should ask Rudolf II for political favours in return. One such favour was that Rudolf should use his authority as emperor and work for the pacification of the Low Countries. In the pope's opinion, a reconciliation between the Dutch and the Spanish Habsburgs would also encourage the English queen to make peace with Philip III and the archdukes. If Spain settled its conflict with the Dutch and with England, Philip III would finally be able to turn his whole attention to the war against the Ottomans. If, however, the English queen

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<sup>506</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1856, no f.: consulta, 2 March 1602.

'remained obstinate', then it would be easier for Philip III to wage war against her once he was free from the war in Flanders.<sup>507</sup>

Clearly, by 1602, Clement VIII did not believe that Spain would be able to win its wars in the north and that it had to come to terms with its enemies. Spain's war with the English and the Dutch only wasted military and financial resources which could be better employed in the defence of Christendom against the Ottomans. Clement VIII still did not consider it appropriate to use his authority as pope to dedicate himself directly to a reconciliation between the Dutch Calvinists and the Catholic Habsburgs. Instead, he wished Rudolf II to exert his influence as emperor: after all, nearly the entire Low Countries, the 'Burgundian Circle', ultimately formed part of the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>508</sup>

At the end of July 1602, Philip III expressed his gratitude that Clement VIII had encouraged Emperor Rudolf II to bring about the pacification of Flanders in his brief of March 1602. Philip III thought that the pope's deed had been important because he had promoted a business which 'had already been forgotten' by the emperor. The king also believed that if Rudolf embraced the matter with the required 'warmth', much could be expected from it. Therefore Philip III charged Sessa to procure that Clement VIII continued to make offices which aimed at the pacification of the Low Countries. This would allow the Spanish king to turn his forces against the 'common enemy' and to support the 'good progresses' of the emperor in the war in Hungary.<sup>509</sup> Clearly, the Spanish king who would directly benefit from an end of the conflict in Flanders considered that Clement VIII was putting his papal authority to good use and wished him to persist in his diplomatic efforts. Clement VIII's exhortation to the Spanish king to wage war against the Ottomans instead of the Calvinist 'rebels' also furnished Philip III with an excuse to end the conflict in Flanders.

By summer 1600, Philip III had decided that a Spanish involvement in an anti-Ottoman league would entail more disadvantages than advantages for Spain but he was willing to subsidise the war of Archduke Ferdinand and Emperor Rudolf against the Ottomans as much as he felt Spain's finances allowed him to do so.<sup>510</sup> Philip III's assurances that a pacification of Flanders would enable him to wage war against the Ottoman enemy therefore were certainly not mere rhetoric. Yet, as we have seen at the beginning of this subchapter, by 1602 the Spanish king and his councillors also had started to realise that Spain needed to end or suspend the war with the Dutch. The previous chapter highlighted that the Spanish thought that they had to defend their reputation as a religious

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<sup>507</sup> AGS, *Estado-K*, 1631, f. 112: Sessa to Philip III, 15 May 1602. See also: AGS, *Estado*, 1856, no f.: consulta, 16 June 1602.

<sup>508</sup> Duerloo, *Dynasty*, p. 61.

<sup>509</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1856, no f.: Philip III to Sessa, 31 July 1602.

<sup>510</sup> Niederkorn, *Mächte*, pp. 218, 247.



and military power when Philip III saw himself compelled to make peace with James VI/I.

Similarly, in the instance of the pacification of Flanders, the war against the Ottomans allowed the king to emphasise that Spain only had waged war in the interest of religion: if he ended up resolving to find an agreement with the Dutch 'heretics', then it was not because of military need or because he prioritised political interests over religious interests. On the contrary, ultimately, coming to terms with the Dutch 'heretics' would enable him to defend the Catholic faith against the advancing Ottomans. The pope's dedication to his role as the *padre comune* who cared for peace in Christendom and worked for the war against the Ottoman 'infidels' thus provided the Spanish king with a rhetorical device which allowed him not to address the disastrous state of the wars in the north and, to some degree, to shield Spain's reputation as a military and religious power.

Equally, Clement VIII's duty to look after the Catholic religion in Christendom signified that Ernest of Bavaria, the prince–elector–archbishop of Cologne, could also advance his own interests in a solution to the armed conflict in the Low Countries. In summer 1602, the elector learnt that Clement had asked Rudolf II to use his authority as emperor for obtaining the pacification of Flanders. Therefore, in mid-August, Ernest sent a letter to the pope and, with reference to the war in the Low Countries, asserted that it could be hoped that peace in these provinces would also promote the Catholic cause.<sup>511</sup> Clement VIII had always been 'the author of peace' and since 'the heart of a king' could be changed according to the will of God, Ernest believed that the pope as the Vicar of Christ could change the heart of princes too. The archbishop thus wished Clement to turn the mind of the princes, that is, of Philip III and the archdukes, to peace. Moreover, Ernest hoped that the pope would convince the emperor to make that, 'by his authority, dedication, care, diligence and intercession', these princes and the Dutch Republic would 'put aside their enmity and arms' in a mutual understanding.<sup>512</sup>

Thus Ernest again invoked Clement VIII's past successes as peacemaker and his duty to look after the interest of the Catholic religion and after peace in the *respublica christiana* in his role as the spiritual head of Christendom. The elector refrained from mentioning confessional differences and simply alluded to the interest of the Catholic religion in the Low Countries. Yet, the archbishop still did not expect that the pope himself would be willing to procure peace between Catholic princes and 'heretics'. Instead, he hoped that Clement VIII's concern for peace would induce the pope to exhort the Catholic side of the conflict to make peace and that he would request the emperor to procure the pacification.

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<sup>511</sup> ASV, *FB, serie III*, 112c.d., ff. 189v–190r: Ernest of Bavaria to Clement VIII, 14 Aug 1602.

<sup>512</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 190r.

Ernest thus tried to use the Holy See as a channel through which the idea of peace across confessional boundaries could be discussed and by which the religious differences as an obstacle to a reconciliation could be removed: after all, the transconfessional peace would be promoted and hence approved by the head of the Catholic Church himself.

In late October 1602 the Spanish Council of State discussed a letter in which the Spanish ambassador in Rome related that Clement had informed him of Ernest's letter. The pontiff had summarised the letter for Sessa and explained that Ernest of Bavaria had stressed that the emperor would be able to pacify Flanders 'by means of some good agreement' if he truly dedicated himself to the matter. Rudolf II, instead, risked that the Habsburgs would soon 'lose the Low Countries' and the Catholic religion with it. The archbishop therefore had asked the pontiff, firstly, to make the emperor look after his duties in this affair; secondly, he wanted Clement VIII to encourage Philip III and Archduke Albert to embrace negotiations.

Clement VIII told Sessa that he had already taken the necessary steps and would continue to undertake everything in order to make the emperor work for the pacification of the Low Countries. The pope also instructed the Spanish ambassador to communicate to Philip III that Ernest had proposed a conference with the Dutch and that the pontiff underlined that 'although he cannot intervene in concerts with heretics as pope', he still agreed that the elector was right to propose that negotiations should be envisaged. As a matter of fact, if the Dutch agreed to submit themselves in due obedience, proposing 'honest conditions', then the Habsburgs should accept them in order to avoid 'major damages'.<sup>513</sup> Evidently, the pontiff did not propose that the Spanish Habsburgs should make peace with the United Provinces as a sovereign power. The pope thought that, now that the Low Countries were no longer part of the Spanish crown, the Dutch could be convinced to submit themselves to Albert and Isabella as the new sovereigns of Flanders. Clement did not only favour the idea that Spain and the archdukes would negotiate a reconciliation with the Dutch 'heretics', he again also advised the Spanish king how to force the emperor into procuring such talks.

The pontiff counselled Philip III to promise financial or military support for Rudolf II's war in Hungary for a few years and to open a prospect on further assistance once the war in the Low Countries was over. The pope recommended to the Spanish king that his promise of support should not remain vague; instead, Philip III should pay the emperor well so that Rudolf II would do 'that which was to his own benefit'.<sup>514</sup> This was a clever

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<sup>513</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1856, no f.: consulta, 26 Oct 1602.

<sup>514</sup> Ibid.

diplomatic manoeuvre of the pontiff. If the king followed Clement's advice, the pope would achieve at least some commitment of Spain to the enterprise closest to his heart: the war against the Ottomans. Sessa agreed with the pope's recommendation. In his letter, Sessa remarked that, 'in addition to what has been said', it would be necessary to charm the people with whom the emperor surrounded himself. The ambassador had heard that these individuals only advised their master to do whatever served their own interest and it was essential 'to deal with them not as is common with great princes but with merchants'.

The Spanish Council of State deemed that Sessa should encourage Clement VIII and the archbishop of Cologne to discuss the matters of Flanders further and approved of the pontiff's idea that Spain ought to use payments for the emperor as a leverage for obtaining the pacification of Flanders. The council also recommended that Philip III should ask Guillén de San Clemente (1550–1608), the Spanish ambassador at the imperial court, for his opinion on the pope's proposal but without yet mentioning any specific amount which could be offered to the emperor for the pacification of the Low Countries.<sup>515</sup> Philip III followed the advice of his councillors but only issued a reply for the ambassador in mid-December 1602, a month and a half after the council had met.<sup>516</sup> Clearly, Philip III and his ministers paid attention to Clement VIII's recommendation and welcomed the pontiff's attempts to contribute to the settlement of Spain's war with the Dutch 'rebels' and 'heretics' indirectly by means of the emperor.

The course of the emperor's war in Hungary and the Spanish Habsburgs' conflicts in the north induced Clement VIII to revisit his rejection to work for the pacification of Flanders by 1602 at the latest. In times of necessity, the pope thus was not only willing to 'close his eyes' if Catholic powers envisaged a reconciliation with a confessional enemy but even considered to lend them diplomatic support for achieving their goal. The pope's traditional duty to care for peace and to defend Christendom against the Ottomans provided a rhetorical framework within which the supreme pontiff and other Catholic princes could discuss making peace across confessional boundaries. The elector of Cologne, who had an active interest in the pacification of Flanders himself, tried to encourage the pontiff in his decision. Ernest of Bavaria had recourse to the pope's past achievements as a peacemaker and emphasised that only peace and stability would allow the Catholic religion to flourish again in the Low Countries. Philip III, on the other hand, could use Clement's exhortation to wage war against the Ottomans as a means to present an eventual compromise with the Dutch 'heretics' as a deed in the interest of the defence of the Catholic religion against the

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<sup>515</sup> Ibid.

<sup>516</sup> Ibid., no f.: Philip III to Sessa, 13 Dec 1602.

Ottomans. Ernest of Bavaria and Philip III thus approved of Clement VIII's resolution to work in favour of peace in the Low Countries.

### **6.3. The pope as promoter of the pacification of Flanders (1603–1604)**

The previous subchapter highlighted that, after some initial hesitation, Clement VIII resolved to use his papal authority for promoting a reconciliation between the Spanish Habsburgs and the Calvinist 'rebels'. How, in the pontiff's opinion, should and could Philip III and the archdukes obtain peace in the Low Countries? And which diplomatic channels was the pope willing to explore in order to intervene in favour of a pacification of Flanders?

In late March 1603, the Spanish ambassador in Rome informed Philip III that Ernest of Bavaria had written another letter to Clement VIII. The archbishop of Cologne had announced that, possibly, the emperor and the imperial diet would charge the elector with the task of procuring a reconciliation between Philip III, the archdukes and their Dutch 'rebels'. The pontiff told Ernest to pursue this matter and to work for an improvement of the Catholic religion 'for as much as he could'. Clement deemed that the archbishop or other possible mediators and the Spanish Habsburgs would have to decide whether it was best to negotiate a long truce or a peace with the Dutch in order to pacify the Low Countries. In agreement with Ernest, the pontiff however did point out to the Spanish ambassador that it would be easier to obtain a truce than a sudden peace. Peace, in Clement VIII's opinion, would entail that those in power in the United Provinces would have to renounce their rule and to submit themselves to the archdukes. This, Clement thought, would be difficult to achieve in a short period of time. The pontiff believed that the Dutch leaders were more likely to consent to negotiating a truce, in which case they would be able to hold on to power. Clement VIII was convinced that 'the common people' would not want to resume war after it had 'tasted the fruit of peace for some years by means of a truce'. The pope therefore thought that a long armistice would probably serve as a step towards peace and the submission of the Dutch to the archdukes in the long-term.<sup>517</sup>

Clement VIII's reflections indicate that he deemed it more advisable for the Habsburgs to envisage a long truce rather than peace negotiations with the object of an immediate resubmission of the United Provinces to Habsburg rule. In late August, the pontiff returned to the topic again and this time he explicitly recommended Philip III to secure a truce for a couple of years. After this many years of civil war, the pope explained,

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<sup>517</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 23 March 1603. I have found the letter of Ernest of Bavaria for Clement VIII which the duke of Sessa mentioned.

it would be difficult to obtain a submission of the Dutch at once. Peace would also require that Philip III and the archdukes negotiated matters of religion with the Dutch and the form of government which they would give to the re-united Low Countries under Albert's and Isabella's rule. The pope thought that during a long truce the Dutch people would realise that their leaders only followed their own interests and that it would be 'a much sweeter yoke to obey to one great prince who was their natural lord than to a thousand little tyrants'. Moreover the pontiff wished Philip III to consider that a truce would allow him to relieve Spain from the costs of war for some time. In the pope's opinion, Spain's war in the Low Countries was unlikely to achieve the suppression of the Dutch rebellion. On the contrary, the Spanish king risked losing those provinces which the Habsburgs still possessed and in order to preserve them, Philip had to employ most of his military forces in Flanders. This costly war, Clement VIII deplored, thus hindered Philip III from undertaking 'other enterprises against infidels which would be of more use and honour' for the Spanish crown.<sup>518</sup>

The pope's recommendation to the Spanish king that he should negotiate a truce with the 'rebels' and 'heretics' in the Low Countries highlights that, by summer 1603, Clement VIII was convinced that Spain would not be able to coerce the Dutch into submission by means of military force. We have seen that in the case of England, after James VI/Is accession in 1603, the pope thought that the Spanish did not have the military strength to win the war. Similarly, also in summer 1603, Clement advised Philip III to reconsider seriously whether his recourse to arms would help him to achieve his goals in Flanders. The pope clearly assessed the situation in the Netherlands as hopeless: after all, one of Clement VIII's arguments in favour of negotiating a truce even was that it would allow Philip III and the archdukes to leave matters of religion aside. The pope thus thought that the Spanish king should temporarily sacrifice the interest of religion for peace and stability in the Low Countries, in the hope that this would allow the Catholic religion to triumph in the long-term.

In mid-October, the Spanish Council of State reviewed Clement VIII's recommendation that the Spanish Habsburgs should negotiate a long truce. The council thought that the pope's advice corresponded with a decision which the Spanish court had already taken.<sup>519</sup> As we have seen at the beginning of the previous subchapter, the Spanish had concluded that Philip III needed to enter into an armistice with the Dutch by November 1602. Yet, the strategy of the Spanish Council of State differed from the pope's approach:

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<sup>518</sup> Ibid., no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 25 Aug 1603.

<sup>519</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 22: consulta, 17 Oct 1603.

the councillors thought that it was necessary to reform the army of Flanders so that, subsequently, Spain would be able to strong-arm the Dutch into negotiations of a truce. Despite this difference, the council told Philip III that the ambassador in Rome should thank Clement VIII for his advice and tell him that the pope's counsel had moved the Spanish king to consider negotiating an armistice. Philip III approved of this idea.<sup>520</sup> The royal councillors thus advised the king to use the same strategy as in the case of England.

In early June 1603, as this thesis has shown, Clement VIII exhorted the king of Spain to make peace with James VI/I after Philip III had already decided to improve his relations with England. Upon the recommendation of his advisers, the Spanish king subsequently presented his decision to make peace with James VI/I as an act of 'obedience' to the pope and used Clement VIII's exhortation as a means to shield Spain's reputation as a military and religious power. We have also seen that the Spanish king and his advisers could justify their intentions to envisage negotiations with the 'heretic' on the English throne to Spanish opponents to any agreements with 'heretics', such as Juan de Ribera, and to critics of Spain's international policies abroad (see Chapter 5.3.). Clearly, in the instance of the truce with the Dutch, the Spanish court intended to repeat this strategy: Philip III, Lerma and other supporters of an agreement with the United Provinces at the Spanish court could emphasise that the negotiations with the Dutch 'heretics' had been approved and even promoted by the pope. But how could Philip III and the archdukes envisage concluding an armistice without risking their reputation as the warring party which proposed negotiations?

Chapter 5 has shown that Clement VIII considered the accession of King James VI/I in England as an opportunity which would allow the Spanish Habsburgs to settle their differences with the English. The pontiff also cherished hopes that the Stuart accession would lead to a solution of the troubles in the Low Countries. In August 1603, during the audience with the Spanish ambassador in which Clement VIII expressed his opinion that Spain should negotiate a long truce with the United Provinces, the pope addressed an idea which the archbishop of Cologne had proposed to him in the past. Ernest believed that it would best if the king of England proposed to the Spanish Habsburgs and the Dutch that they should negotiate a long truce. Ernest of Bavaria and Clement VIII deemed that such a proposal would be in the interest of James VI/I: the new English king certainly did not want to desert the allies and friends of his predecessor as soon as he had ascended to the English throne. The pope and Ernest also doubted that the Dutch would dare to reject the idea of a truce if James VI/I proposed it since they would lose his favour and might move the

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<sup>520</sup> Ibid.

English king to make peace with Spain without any consideration for them.<sup>521</sup> The pontiff and Ernest thus hoped that the two parties of conflict in the Low Countries would embrace negotiations of a truce if it was proposed by a third party. James VI/I had no evident links to the Spanish Habsburgs and hence the archdukes and Philip III could envisage negotiations without giving the impression that they needed a truce and therefore had initiated the dialogue with the United Provinces. The Dutch, conversely, could point out that they saw themselves compelled to negotiate by their English ally. But how could the idea that James VI/I should work for a truce reach the ears of the king, without making him believe that the project had originated in Valladolid or Brussels?

The pope pointed out that 'he considered' that 'he could not intervene' and ask James VI/I to propose a truce to the Habsburgs and the Dutch because he was 'a heretical king'.<sup>522</sup> The most appropriate person of whom Clement VIII could think was the archbishop of Cologne. Ernest could present his request to the English king as a prince whose territories continuously received damages from the war in the Low Countries and thus wished to see Flanders pacified again. In the end, however, the pope did not yet decide who should approach James VI/I on the subject in late August 1603.<sup>523</sup> A couple of weeks later, the pontiff made up his mind.

At the end of September, Clement VIII informed Sessa that he had contacted the archbishop of Cologne. The pontiff asked Ernest to let him know how difficult or easy it would be to work for 'the pacification of the rebels of Flanders or for some truce'. Clement VIII also enquired whether it would be a good idea to contact James VI/I 'by some indirect way' so that he would propose to Philip III, the archdukes and the United Provinces that they should negotiate a truce. The pope also asked the elector how James VI/I could be convinced that it would be in his best interest to help settling the war in the Low Countries. Clement promised to the Spanish ambassador that he had presented himself as the author of these enquires. The pope had explained to Ernest that he had contacted him because he desired the pacification of the Low Countries 'for the universal good'. The pontiff did not tell the elector that he had mentioned his ideas to anybody else. The Spanish Council of State recommended to Philip III that he should approve of the pope's diplomatic initiative and the king concurred with the opinion of his councillors.<sup>524</sup>

Clement VIII thus used his duty as the spiritual head of the *respublica christiana* to care for the common good of Christendom for shielding the reputation of Spain who, in his

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<sup>521</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 25 Aug 1603. See also: AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 22: consulta, 17 Oct 1603.

<sup>522</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 977, no f.: Sessa to Philip III, 25 Aug 1603.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid. See also: AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 22: consulta, 17 Oct 1603.

<sup>524</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 25: consulta, 16 Dec 1603.

opinion, needed to start negotiating a truce as soon as possible. Instead of fomenting war against the confessional enemy, the head of the Catholic Church had recourse to his office as a peacemaker and promoted the resolution of a cross-confessional conflict, with the approval and at the insistence of other Catholic princes such as Philip III and Ernest of Bavaria. Evidently, when their own interest was affected, Catholic princes were willing to come to terms with the confessional enemy. And, if circumstances demanded it, Clement VIII was ready to depart from the intransigent course of his predecessors, to consider the political and military exigencies of Catholic rulers and to employ his authority as pope for promoting the conclusion of an agreement between Catholic sovereigns and their 'heretical' subjects in diplomatic initiatives.

Clement VIII did not merely rely on the archbishop of Cologne for making James VI/I propose a truce to the other warring parties in the Low Countries. The pontiff also charged Cardinal Ottavio Parravicini (1552–1611), the cardinal–protector of the empire since Madruzzo's death in 1600,<sup>525</sup> to contact Rudolf II. As mentioned, the pope wished the imperial ambassador in England to request James VI/I to treat his Catholic subjects with benevolence (see Chapter 4.2.). However, Clement VIII also wanted the emperor's ambassador to work for the pacification of Flanders since, ultimately, this would also help the emperor to reassert his authority in the empire. The Spanish ambassador in Rome thought that this was a good idea. Sessa believed that this would provide James VI/I with an excuse for proposing a truce in the Low Countries: the king could emphasise to potential critics that he had to comply with the wishes of the emperor and the empire.<sup>526</sup> Obviously, the British Islands did not belong to the Holy Roman Empire; Sessa's opinion therefore suggests that, oddly, he considered the authority of the emperor as the temporal head of the *respublica christiana* still as such that a Protestant prince could use it for warding off criticism if he complied with the demands of the emperor.

In February 1604, the new Spanish ambassador in Rome, the duke of Escalona, related that, as instructed, he had praised Clement VIII for his opinion that Spain should envisage a long truce or suspension of arms with the Dutch 'rebels' at the request of the English king.<sup>527</sup> Also as instructed, Escalona pretended that Philip III had resolved to negotiate an armistice with the Dutch because the pope had thought that this was the course of action which Spain should take in this conflict. Clement showed himself pleased that his opinion was heard in Spain and replied that the elector was the best person to take up this

<sup>525</sup> Stefano Tabacchi, 'Parravicini, Ottavio', *DBI*, 81 (2014), p. 447.

<sup>526</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 25: consulta, 16 Dec 1603.

<sup>527</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 978, no f. (old f. 17): Escalona to Philip III, 10 Feb 1604. See also above for the opinion of the Spanish Council of State and Philip III's decision in this matter: AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 22: consulta, 17 Oct 1603.



initiative: Ernest received Spanish pensions and was thus particularly obliged to satisfy the needs of Philip III in this matter. Therefore, Clement VIII decided to contact Ernest and to tell him that he should make James VI/I propose a truce between the Spanish Habsburgs and the United Provinces.<sup>528</sup>

In early April 1604, Escalona related that he had thanked Clement VIII for the 'good offices which he had made with the elector of Cologne for the pacification of Flanders'.<sup>529</sup> Clement VIII replied that he had requested the elector to present the whole idea as his own and that he should also recommend James VI/I to make peace with Spain. Clement hoped that the Anglo-Spanish peace would subsequently lead to a long truce with the Dutch. So far, however, Clement VIII had not yet received any answer from Ernest of Bavaria.<sup>530</sup> On 11 June Philip III tasked his ambassador to find out whether Clement VIII had heard back from Ernest.<sup>531</sup> clearly, the Spanish king attentively followed the efforts of the archbishop and the pope in the hope that they would further Spain's interests. One month later, Escalona informed Philip III that Clement had assured the ambassador that he had urged Ernest twice to contact James VI/I. Still, the pope had not yet received any reply because the elector was attending a meeting with the other two ecclesiastical prince-electors with whom he discussed the pacification of the Low Countries and the possible election of a king of the Romans.<sup>532</sup> Evidently, the Spanish king followed the pope's diplomatic initiative with interest and deemed that there was a chance for Spain to benefit from it. Clement VIII, in turn, decided not to cease exerting diplomatic pressure on Rudolf II in order to make him advocate a long truce in the Low Countries.

In late July 1604, the Cardinal-Nephew Pietro Aldobrandini told the nuncio in Spain, Domenico Ginnasi (1550–1639), that Clement VIII was doing everything he could for the pacification of the Low Countries and 'had not omitted to promote it with the emperor, at the diet and among the ecclesiastical prince-electors'. Aldobrandini related that the emperor had asked all Christian princes to support his war in Hungary. In reply to Rudolf II's request, the pope pointed out that if the emperor had promoted the reconciliation of the Dutch with the Spanish Habsburgs, then Philip III would have had the necessary means to

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<sup>528</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 978, no f. (old f. 17): Escalona to Philip III, 10 Feb 1604.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid., no f.: Escalona to Philip III, 6 April 1604. See also above for the opinion of the Spanish Council of State and Philip III's decision in this matter: AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 25: consulta, 16 Dec 1603.

<sup>530</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 978, no f.: Escalona to Philip III, 6 April 1604.

<sup>531</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 338: Philip III to Escalona, 11 June 1604.

<sup>532</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 978, no f.: Escalona to Philip III, 12 July 1604. Rudolf II's refusal to arrange for the election of another Habsburg as king of the Romans is a topic which Clement VIII, Ernest of Bavaria and the Spanish Habsburgs discussed frequently and often in conjunction with requests to Rudolf II to use his authority as emperor for the pacification of Flanders. Duerloo, 'Der ehrgeizige Jüngste', passim.

assist Rudolf in his anti-Ottoman war.<sup>533</sup>

Clement VIII thus tried to use Rudolf II's need for support in the anti-Ottoman war for convincing the emperor to dedicate himself finally to working towards an end of the conflict between his relatives and the United Provinces. Evidently, the pope felt that the emperor had to be clearly reminded that, if he helped the archdukes and Philip III, he would ultimately further his own interests. The pontiff's rather reproachful answer was met with the applause of Guillén de San Clemente, the Spanish ambassador at the imperial court, who 'had praised it a lot and had heard it with great delight'. San Clemente deemed that the pontiff 'had pushed all buttons which could move the emperor to embrace this business of the pacification'.<sup>534</sup> Unlike the Spanish ambassador at the imperial court, the emperor was less pleased that the pope had acted as an intermediary on behalf of Philip III.

In early August 1604, Escalona informed Philip III that the emperor's ambassador in Rome, the marquis of Castiglione (1577–1616), had sent a letter to Rudolf II at the request of Pope Clement VIII. In this letter, the marquis emphasised that, in the pontiff's opinion, it was crucial that the emperor dedicated himself to pacifying the Low Countries and that Rudolf II sent ambassadors to James VI/I for this purpose. Escalona reported that Rudolf had declared himself most willing to do this but at the same time he had also resented that he had been approached on the subject 'by means of the pope'. The emperor would have embraced the request with more enthusiasm if his relatives, Philip III and Albert, had asked him for this favour directly. Escalona therefore recommended that the Spanish king appease Rudolf II's hurt feelings, explaining that the idea had originated with Clement VIII who was moved by his great desire to see the whole affair in Flanders settled soon.<sup>535</sup>

In early October 1604, Philip III instructed Escalona to thank the imperial ambassador in Rome that he had requested the king's uncle, Rudolf II, to help ending the conflict in the Low Countries. The Spanish ambassador also had to tell the marquis of Castiglione that he could ensure the emperor that the Spanish king had not asked the pope to contact Rudolf. On the contrary, 'His Holiness wanted to do this due to the office and place which he occupies' because he wished to free Philip III of his war in Flanders so that the king could turn his entire attention to the war 'against the common enemy in the interest of the whole of Christendom'.<sup>536</sup> Philip III's tone thus was gentler than Clement VIII's rebuke for Rudolf II in reply to the emperor's plea for assistance in the anti-Ottoman war. The message, however, was the same: the emperor should promote the reconciliation of the

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<sup>533</sup> ASV, *Segreteria di Stato, Spagna*, 332, f. 55r–v: Aldobrandini to Ginnasi, 26 July 1604.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid., f. 55v: Aldobrandini to Ginnasi, 26 July 1604.

<sup>535</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 978, no f. (old f. 187): Escalona to Philip III, 7 Aug 1604.

<sup>536</sup> AGS, *Estado*, 1857, f. 392: Philip III to Escalona, 7 Oct 1604.

Dutch with the Spanish king if he wanted Spain to be able to support Rudolf II's war.

Interestingly, the Spanish king explained that Clement VIII was motivated 'by his office and the place which he occupies'. Presented like this, the pope's duty to care for the protection of Christendom against the Ottomans received priority over his office to protect the Church against 'heretics'. Philip III thus could use the pontiff's concern for the war against the Ottomans to excuse his intention to enter into a truce with 'heretics' and, at the same time, to justify the pope's diplomatic initiatives in favour of a reconciliation across confessional boundaries. Indeed, the pope's diplomatic efforts in favour of the pacification of the Low Countries were chiefly motivated by his conviction that Christendom, and the Italian peninsula in particular, needed protection against the Ottomans.

In July 1604, Cardinal Aldobrandini stressed in a letter to the nuncio in Spain that, as 'a father thus affected to the service' of the Spanish king, Clement VIII would always do everything in his power which could help Philip III. However, in the affairs relating to the pacification of the Low Countries, Aldobrandini admitted, the pope did not solely have Philip III's interest in mind; it was also thus important to the pope because, clearly, the king's 'resolution to turn the forces against the Turk' depended entirely on this pacification.<sup>537</sup> In the pope's eyes, the war against the Ottomans justified his attempts to exert influence on Rudolf II and, via indirect means such as the emperor and the elector of Cologne, even on James VI/I in order to obtain the pacification of Flanders. However, it is also necessary to emphasise that Clement VIII seems to have concurred with the archbishop of Cologne that the war in the Low Countries did more damage than good to the Catholic religion.

In December 1604, the papal instruction for a new nuncio to Spain emphasised that the Holy See could not exhort the Spanish king to make peace with the Dutch because they were 'heretics and rebels'. Yet, the nuncio should ask the king 'to consider ending this war' since it was not going well at all and the war damaged the reputation of Philip III and the archdukes. Spain spent an enormous amount of money and wasted military personnel 'from Spain, Italy and elsewhere' in a war against 'a rebel' who drew its resources from 'two islands' only. If 'a people this weak and of such little esteem' managed to resist the mighty Spanish army, it might inspire others to follow the example of the Dutch. The king of Spain therefore should somehow end the war, also in the interest of religion. In the Dutch provinces, the instruction argued, 'they no longer know what religion is, neither the Catholic nor any other religion' because of the constant war. The same was true for the provinces loyal to the archdukes and to Philip III 'because the voice of the preachers could

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<sup>537</sup> ASV, *Segreteria di Stato, Spagna*, 332, f. 50r–v: Aldobrandini to Ginnasi, 25 July 1604.

hardly be heard among the clamour of the trumpets and of the drums' of war.<sup>538</sup> Evidently, the pontiff felt that the war in the Low Countries had to end and resolved to work towards this goal in the hope that he would ultimately be able to contribute towards the cause of the Catholic religion in Flanders in particular and the protection of Christendom against the Ottomans in general.

Despite all his exhortations and diplomatic efforts, Clement did not live to learn that Philip III, the archdukes and the United Provinces had signed a long truce. As we have seen, in August 1604, Clement VIII received the good news of the Anglo-Spanish peace. Yet, the Treaty of London did not lead to a cessation of hostilities in Flanders. As Geoffrey Parker pointed out, after nearly twenty years of conflict with France and England, from 1604 onwards, the Spanish king could concentrate his military and financial resources on the Low Countries again.<sup>539</sup> Philip III used this new situation: in 1605 and 1606, the Spanish king spent enormous sums on the war against the United Provinces which was one of the reasons that Spain was bankrupt again by 1607.<sup>540</sup> In April 1607, the warring parties signed an armistice and the ensuing negotiations ended in the conclusion of the Twelve Years Truce in April 1609. Contrary to Clement VIII's hopes and expectations, the long truce was not directly followed by peace and the hostilities resumed in 1621 until the final conclusion of peace on 30 January 1648 in Westphalia.<sup>541</sup> By then, Clement VIII had long been dead: after suffering a stroke, the Aldobrandini pontiff died on 3 March 1605 at the age of sixty-nine.<sup>542</sup>

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Contrary to Hortal Muñoz's assertion, Clement VIII did not refuse to intervene in favour of peace between the Spanish Habsburgs and the United Provinces in 1598 because he wished to see Spain's military forces engaged in a war. The Spanish may have regarded Clement VIII's attitude towards the French king as too lenient and thus considered him a Francophile. However, this does not signify that the pope wanted Spain to waste most of its resources in a military conflict which damaged the Catholic cause in the Low Countries and, more widely, in Christendom. As Agostino Borromeo has observed, Clement VIII's absolution of Henry of Navarre certainly had aimed at re-establishing the balance of power

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<sup>538</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, p. 769. See also: Visceglia, *Roma papale*, p. 82.

<sup>539</sup> Parker, *Grand Strategy*, p. 280.

<sup>540</sup> Croft, 'Brussels and London', p. 84; Niederkorn, *Mächte*, p. 253.

<sup>541</sup> Randall Lesaffer, Erik-Jan Broers and Johanna Waelkens, 'From Antwerp to Munster (1609/1648): truce and peace under the Law of Nations', in Lesaffer (ed.), *Twelve Years*, pp. 233–236.

<sup>542</sup> Borromeo, 'Clemente VIII', p. 279.

between Spain and France in the long-term but in the years immediately after 1595, the Spanish crown remained 'the most secure support' of the Holy See and of its interests.<sup>543</sup>

Chapter 5 has highlighted that Clement VIII had exhorted Philip III to end the conflict with England after James VI/I's accession in 1603 and that the pope deemed that Spain did not need to insist on the interest of religion as an absolute condition for making peace. James VI/I certainly was a special case because the pontiff hoped that the Protestant king would favour his Catholic subjects and maybe even convert if the right influence could be exerted on him. This chapter, however, demonstrated that England did not constitute a major exception to Clement VIII's attitude towards cross-confessional peace.

As early as 1598, the Aldobrandini pope declared that he would simply close his eyes if the Spanish Habsburgs envisaged a reconciliation with the Dutch 'heretics' and 'rebels'. By 1602, the pontiff realised that Spain and the army of Flanders would not be able to reduce the United Provinces to obedience even after the peace of Vervins had freed those Spanish military resources which had been tied up in the war against France. Equally, the pope was deeply concerned about the course of the war against the Ottomans. As a consequence, the pope decided to abandon his initial reluctance to work for peace in Flanders. Clement VIII tried to encourage the emperor to restore peace in the Low Countries and even attempted to make the English king propose a truce by means of the elector of Cologne and of the emperor. The pontiff hoped that a long truce would make the Dutch 'rebels' realise again that it was better to live in peace than in constant war and that a new desire for peace would ultimately induced them to resubmit themselves to their sovereigns. Peace and stability, in turn, the pope expected, would also allow the Catholic archdukes to restore the 'true' religion in all seventeen provinces of the Netherlands in the long-term.

The Catholic rulers who were directly affected by the war in Flanders considered the pope as the appropriate means to promote the pacification of the Low Countries. Ernest of Bavaria in particular appealed to the pontiff's traditional role as supreme peacemaker and to Clement VIII's specific record as a pacifier in order to request and encourage the pope to intervene in the conflict between the Dutch and the Spanish Habsburgs. The pope's traditional office as a peacemaker, however, received a new dimension in this particular conflict: Ernest asked the pontiff to advocate a reconciliation between Catholics and 'heretics'. Spain, on the other hand, welcomed another aspect of the pope's duties as the spiritual head of Christendom: the pope's concern for the war against the Sublime Porte. The anti-Ottoman war provided the Spanish court with a means to deflect the fact that

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<sup>543</sup> Borromeo, 'Istruzioni', p. 121.

Spain did not have the military power or ability to submit its 'rebels' in the Low Countries; instead, when referring to the option of entering into a truce with the Dutch, Philip III could emphasise that he only considered such a course of action because the pope wanted him to support Rudolf II in the war against the Ottomans. Moreover, the king and his advisers most likely also encouraged Clement VIII in his diplomatic initiatives because the pope's approval and promotion of an agreement with 'heretics' served to counter criticism and opposition to Spain's accommodating policy towards the Dutch 'heretics'. Towards the end of Clement VIII's pontificate, the Holy See thus became a channel through which Catholic princes could pass and get informal approval for their religio-political policies which aimed at settling their differences with 'heretics' by the means of diplomacy rather than war.

As Johannes Burkhardt has observed, the early modern papacy never considered using formal diplomatic means for making peace between Catholic and Protestant (sovereign) powers. This chapter has demonstrated that Clement VIII did not even consider to reconcile Catholic rulers with their Calvinistic, rebelling subjects by direct diplomatic intervention. The pope did, however, wish for a temporary settlement of the conflict in the Low Countries and, after some hesitation, decided to intervene in the conflict indirectly by promoting the idea of a long truce via various diplomatic channels. Clearly, Clement did not want the Holy See to be seen as entering into contact with confessional enemies or as openly favouring a transconfessional settlement. Yet, he also deemed that the Spanish Habsburgs were far from winning the war in Flanders soon – to the detriment of the Catholic religion there – and that Spain's military resources could be better employed in the anti-Ottoman war. After all, as we have seen, the pope feared that the fall of Canissa would allow the 'infidels' to set foot on the Italian peninsula soon. Therefore Clement VIII's interests as an Italian temporal prince also influenced the pontiff in his decision that the spiritual head of the *respublica christiana* could promote a truce between Catholics and 'heretics' in order to pacify Christendom and to turn Catholic forces against the Ottomans.

The findings in this chapter show that Clement VIII was willing to refrain from insisting on religious intransigence in diplomatic and political practice. If necessary, the pope was ready to embrace a pragmatic policy in international conflicts involving Catholic powers and their religious enemies – unless this enemy was the Ottoman 'infidel'. Equally, other Catholic princes did not necessarily expect the pope to foment war against adherents of another confessional church and invoked his duty as the supreme peacemaker of Christendom for the resolution of a conflict which had a confessional dimension. In the late sixteenth century, as the third part of this thesis will show, even a confessional enemy of the pope deemed that he could appeal to the pontiff's duties to care for peace in

Christendom and for its defence against the Ottomans.

### ***PART III***

#### ***Poland & Sweden***



## Introduction

The research for this part started when I came across an inconspicuous copy of a letter in bundle twenty-one of the *Fondo Aldobrandini* in the *Archivio Doria Pamphilj* in Rome whose importance hitherto has not yet been recognised. The barely legible signature of the copy read 'Carlo' or, more likely, 'Car(o)lo' (see Appendix).<sup>544</sup> The non-descript appearance of the copy of Charles's letter makes it easily overlooked; the salutation of the missive, however, captures the eye of the papal historian.

As seen in Chapter 4, in Catholic epistolary practice, the salutation for the pope usually involved a reference to the pope as 'father', such as 'Beatissime Pater' or 'Illustrissime et Reverendissime in Christo Pater'. We have also seen that it was customary for Catholics to address the head of the Roman Catholic Church as 'Sanctitas Vestra' or 'Sanctitas Tua'. In his letter to Pope Clement VIII, however, this Charles greeted the pontiff as 'Reverendissime et Potentissime Domine Romanae Catholicae Ecclesiae Pontifex'. Moreover, throughout the letter, the author of the letter addressed the pope as 'Reverentia Tua'.<sup>545</sup> This missive therefore clearly deviated from the epistolary practice which was usually employed in letters for the pope. This indicates that the author of the letter was not a Catholic.

The example of King James VI in Chapter 4 has shown that it was not unknown for non-Catholics to write letters to the pope. What makes this missive so special then? The letter's author wrote that the pope had sent him an epistle in which Clement VIII had expressed his wish for peace between the Polish king, the Catholic Sigismund III Vasa (r. 1587–1632), and him, Charles. The person who drafted the letter asserted that he would be willing to receive a papal peacemaker if Clement VIII decided to dispatch one. This letter indicates that in the year 1600 a non-Catholic expected that Clement VIII would envisage making peace across confessional boundaries and that the letter's author showed himself ready to accept such a papal intervention for peace. But who was this non-Catholic Charles who contacted Clement VIII on matters of peace with a Catholic king?

The cover of the folder which contains this copy indicates that there is a letter of

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<sup>544</sup> ADP, *FA*, 21, f. 105r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S.].

<sup>545</sup> Ibid.

Duke Charles from the year 1600.<sup>546</sup> In 1969 Renato Vignodelli Rubrichi printed a catalogue to the *Fondo Aldobrandini* in which this epistle is preserved. Vignodelli Rubrichi, however, was not able to identify the author and simply listed the document as 'Lettera di Carlo duca [di?] a. 1600.'<sup>547</sup> The duke signed his letter for Clement VIII in the stronghold of Wittenstein.<sup>548</sup> Upon some investigation, I learnt that in present-day Paide in Estonia, there is a castle after which the town used to be named: 'Wittenstein' or 'Weissenstein'.<sup>549</sup> And, in December 1600, Estonia, a province in the north of the historic region of Livonia, was under the control of a certain Duke Charles who fought with King Sigismund III over parts of Livonia, then under Polish rule.<sup>550</sup> As it turned out, the author of the letter was nobody less than Sigismund III's uncle, the Lutheran Charles Vasa, duke of Södermanland, Närke and Värmland (1550–1611) and later King Charles IX of Sweden (r. 1604–1611). Therefore, the importance of this document derives from the fact that, in the early seventeenth century, a Protestant nobleman had recourse to the pope as a peacemaker. In the end, as we will see, the letter was only the third and last letter in an epistolary exchange between Pope Clement VIII and the Lutheran duke.

This part of the thesis illuminates a largely unwritten chapter of Clement VIII's pontificate. Part II of this thesis concentrated on conflicts in north-western Europe. It demonstrated that although Clement VIII refused to make peace between Catholic and Protestant powers, he was not against transconfessional peace negotiations *per se*. The two chapters in this third part move the focus to a conflict with a confessional dimension in north-eastern Europe. I will argue that even the pope's objection to reconciling Protestants and Catholics by direct papal intervention was less categorical than it seemed. The aim of these two chapters is to show in a specific case study that the traditional duties of the spiritual head of Christendom provided a rhetorical framework within which the pontiff and even an enemy of the Catholic Church could discuss the pope's intervention as peacemaker in a confessional conflict. First of all, however, this introduction provides the necessary historical context and discusses the historiography on Clement VIII's involvement in Polish-Swedish affairs.

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<sup>546</sup> Ibid. (Folder title: 'dal 1592 al 1603. Lettere del vicerè di Napoli a Papa Clemente VIII. Una Lettera del Duca Carlo del 1600').

<sup>547</sup> Renato Vignodelli Rubrichi, 'Il Fondo Aldobrandini dell'Archivio Doria Landi Pamphilj', *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria*, 92 (1969), p. 24.

<sup>548</sup> ADP, FA, 21, f. 105r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S.].

<sup>549</sup> *Paide since 1291* (Official Website of Paide), 'History of Paide town', <<http://www.paide.ee/index.php?page=10&>> [accessed 8 Nov 2013].

<sup>550</sup> Michael Roberts, *The Early Vasas: A History of Sweden (1523–1611)* (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 399, 402; Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, vol. I (*The Origins to 1795*) (Oxford, 2005 ed.), p. 338.

Sigismund Vasa, the later king of Poland and Sweden, was born in a Swedish prison in 1566. His father was the Protestant John Vasa, duke of Finland (1537–1592)<sup>551</sup> and his grandfather King Gustav I of Sweden (r. 1523–1560) who had introduced the Reformation in Sweden.<sup>552</sup> Sigismund's mother, on the other hand, was a Catholic: Catherine Jagiellon (1526–1583), sister to the last Jagiellonian king, Sigismund II Augustus of Poland (r. 1548–1572). John Vasa was crowned King John III of Sweden in 1569 after the Swedish Estates (*riksdag*) had deposed his brother, Eric XIV (r. 1560–1568), on whose order John and Catherine had been imprisoned. Under the influence of his Catholic wife, John III changed the ecumenical liturgy of the Swedish Lutheran Church by 'blending elements from both the Tridentine Catholic and Swedish Lutheran models' in 1576. Two years later, he secretly converted to the Catholic faith.<sup>553</sup> Sigismund, the heir to the Lutheran kingdom of Sweden, was educated by Jesuits whose Catholic teachings fell on fruitful soil. Sigismund's Catholic faith made him a suitable candidate for the Polish throne and, indeed, in 1587 John III of Sweden secured the election of his son as Sigismund III, king of Poland and grand-duke of Lithuania.<sup>554</sup> Sigismund's faith may have worked in favour of his election in Catholic Poland; it certainly also complicated matters in Lutheran Sweden.

Sigismund III of Poland ruled 'the most powerful state in Eastern Europe' and the eventual inheritance of Sweden opened prospects of him becoming the ruler of 'a potentially very powerful combination of territories from the Black Sea to the Arctic'.<sup>555</sup> The death of Sigismund III's father in late 1592, however, was followed by a power struggle between Sigismund and his uncle, Charles Vasa, duke of Södermanland, 'the champion of the Protestant nobility' in Sweden.<sup>556</sup> Duke Charles presented Sigismund's Catholic faith as a threat to the Swedish Lutherans and summoned a synod of the Swedish Church in 1593. This synod, the Uppsala Assembly, declared the Augsburg Confession as the official creed of the Swedish Church and adopted the Lutheran Catechism before the new Catholic king arrived in Sweden in the early autumn of 1593.<sup>557</sup>

When the king of Poland disembarked in Sweden for the obsequies of his father and for his coronation, he received a stiff reception. The Jesuits and confessors in the king's

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<sup>551</sup> Davies, *Playground*, p. 328.

<sup>552</sup> Sven Lundkvist, 'The European powers and Sweden in the reign of Gustav Vasa', in Kouri and Scott (eds.), *Politics and Society*, p. 505. More detailed: Roberts, *Vasas*, pp. 75–91.

<sup>553</sup> Davies, *Playground*, p. 328; Roberts, *Vasas*, pp. 242–243, 281–282.

<sup>554</sup> Daniel Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386–1795* (London, 2001), p. 131; Davies, *Playground*, p. 328.

<sup>555</sup> Jan Glete, *Swedish Naval Administration (1521–1721): Resource Flows and Organisational Capabilities* (Leiden, 2010), p. 90.

<sup>556</sup> Davies, *Playground*, p. 328.

<sup>557</sup> Glete, *Administration*, p. 90; Roberts, *Vasas*, pp. 336–337. In the eyes of Duke Charles the synod retained too many 'Roman ceremonies', which aroused the suspicion that he shared the inclination of his brother, Eric XIV, towards Calvinism. See: Thomas L. Kington-Oliphant, *Rome and Reform* (Dallas, 1971 ed.), p. 262.

retinue, and the pope's nuncio Germanico Malaspina (1547/1550–1603) in particular, were not welcome.<sup>558</sup> Sigismund had to accept his coronation by a Protestant bishop on 19 February 1594 and when he returned to Poland in July 1594, he had to leave his uncle, Charles Vasa, in charge of a regency council which governed the Swedish kingdom in his absence.<sup>559</sup> In order to affirm his rule over Sweden from Poland *in absentia*, the king named 'provincial governors and military commanders who took their orders from him' rather than from his uncle. These measures allowed Sigismund to exert full authority in the duchy of Finland.<sup>560</sup>

In summer 1595, Duke Charles called a meeting of the Swedish Estates (*riksdag*) against the express order of King Sigismund. After some initial resistance, the Estates accepted Duke Charles as regent of Sweden (*riksföreståndare*) but insisted that the monarch had to confirm this title. The Finnish Estates, however, refused to do the same and in February 1596 the lord–lieutenant (*ståthållare*) and commander–in–chief in Finland, Klas Fleming, received an order from Sigismund to resist all efforts aimed at curtailing his royal authority. In the same year, tensions between Duke Charles and the Swedish Council of State (*råd*) increased to such a degree that Charles Vasa projected to try the members of the *råd* by the *riksdag*. Meanwhile, the duke intended to subdue Finland. As a consequence, more and more of Sigismund's supporters, lord–lieutenants and members of the *råd* alike, fled to Warsaw where they informed King Sigismund of the proceedings of his uncle. Twice the king sent an envoy to his uncle in order to reassert his authority in 1598, and twice he failed. On 23 July, Sigismund therefore embarked on a military campaign against his uncle.

Sigismund's campaign in Sweden ended in a disaster. The Swedish king saw himself compelled to solicit an armistice from his uncle and in late September 1598, the two relatives signed a treaty in Linköping, wherein they promised to forget their quarrels and to disband their troops. Sigismund declared that he would now rule Sweden from Stockholm and started preparations for this purpose. The ship which he boarded on 11 October, however, did not sail to Stockholm but to Kalmar and then to Danzig. The king of Sweden left his native kingdom. Unintentionally, he did so forever.<sup>561</sup>

There is no known record of the cause for the king's sudden departure. Michael Roberts stressed that Sigismund III certainly had not left without any good reason, such as 'the arrival of an urgent summons from Poland' or 'some disturbing rumour' about the

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<sup>558</sup> For Malaspina's biography, see: JAITNER, vol. I, pp. CCX–CCXIV; Alexander Koller, 'Malaspina, Germanico', *DBI*, 67 (2007), pp. 776–779.

<sup>559</sup> Stone, *State*, p. 139. See also: Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIV, pp. 88–101, 544–557.

<sup>560</sup> Glete, *Administration*, p. 90.

<sup>561</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, pp. 358–359, 361, 364, 371, 375–379, 382–384.

intentions of his uncle. In any case, whether the monarch merely hastened to Poland or actually fled from Sweden, his abrupt, unadvertised departure was regarded as a breach of the Treaty of Linköping and cost him the Swedish throne.<sup>562</sup> In July 1599, the *riksdag* deposed the king and in 1604 Charles Vasa, duke of Södermanland, ascended the Swedish throne as Charles IX.<sup>563</sup> Sigismund never returned to Sweden after 1598 but maintained his claim to the Swedish throne up to his death in 1632.<sup>564</sup> Charles IX and subsequently his oldest son and successor, Gustav II Adolf (r. 1611–1632), on the other hand, 'attempted to represent Sigismund in the eyes of Europe as embodying the threat of the Counter-Reformation to the Protestant north.' By doing so, according to Jill Lisk, they introduced Sweden into the religious and political struggles which led to the Thirty Years' War.<sup>565</sup> It is in this historical context that, in December 1600, the Protestant duke of Södermanland sent his letter to Pope Clement VIII.

The two chapters in this part concentrate on the conflict between Duke Charles and Sigismund of Poland in the crucial years of 1598 to 1601, when Charles Vasa managed to seize control over Sweden and its possessions in Finland and Estonia as well as a portion of Polish Livonia. At the same time, Sigismund III had difficulties in mobilising troops against his uncle. In Anglophone historiography, the strife between Duke Charles and King Sigismund received, and still receives, mostly attention by military historians and as an episode within the wider context of the struggle of Poland, Sweden, Denmark and Muscovy for the control over the Baltic Sea.<sup>566</sup> Recently, Robert I. Frost situated this conflict more widely within Polish-Swedish history, state-building and dynastic policies.<sup>567</sup> Roberts still offers the most detailed analysis of the power struggle between King Sigismund and his uncle in English.<sup>568</sup> Roberts, however, does not discuss papal attempts to reconcile the two relatives.

Ludwig von Pastor ended his account of Clement VIII's efforts in restoring the Catholic faith in Sweden with King Sigismund's deposition in 1599.<sup>569</sup> Pastor's defence of

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<sup>562</sup> Ibid., pp. 383–384.

<sup>563</sup> Stone, *State*, p. 140.

<sup>564</sup> Davies, *Playground*, pp. 330, 338.

<sup>565</sup> Jill Lisk, *The Struggle for Supremacy in the Baltic (1600–1725)* (London, 1967), pp. 36–37. More generally, see: Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe: Spain, the Dutch Republic and Sweden as Fiscal-Military States (1500–1660)* (London, 2002), pp. 174–212; Stone, *State*, pp. 131–232.

<sup>566</sup> E.g.: Stewart P. Oakley, *War and Peace in the Baltic (1560–1790)* (London, 1992), pp. 40–48; Robert I. Frost, *The Northern Wars: War, State and Society in Northeastern Europe (1558–1721)* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 44–73; Glete, *Administration*, pp. 90–94.

<sup>567</sup> Robert I. Frost, 'The limits of dynastic power: Poland–Lithuania, Sweden and the problem of composite monarchy in the Age of the Vasas, 1562–1668', in Tonio Andrade and William Reger (eds.), *The Limits of Empire: European Imperial Formations in Early Modern World History: Essays in Honor of Geoffrey Parker* (Farnham, 2013), pp. 137–154.

<sup>568</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, pp. 327–411. More concise is: Stone, *State*, pp. 131–40.

<sup>569</sup> Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIV, p. 109.

the papacy has remained the best starting point for papal historians to locate primary sources. Consequently, the considerations of the Holy See to settle this conflict in 1600–1601 have escaped the attention of researchers interested in the papacy as a peacemaking force. In 1863 and 1930, the Swedish scholars Theodor Norlin and Daniel Toijer referred to Duke Charles's recourse to Clement VIII's duty to care for peace in Christendom. Their studies, however, did not concentrate on the pope's perspective on the struggle of the Vasa relatives and they did not have access to the full set of correspondence between the pope and the Lutheran duke to which they only referred in passing.<sup>570</sup> Writing in 1980, Oskar Garstein was aware of Norlin and Toijer's work and thus also knew of the existence of a part of the correspondence between Duke Charles and Clement VIII. As we will see, Garstein however misread his primary and secondary sources and thus, eventually, misinterpreted the pontiff's reaction to a first letter which Duke Charles had sent to the pope in 1599.<sup>571</sup> This part of the thesis aims to rectify these scholarly short-comings.

In 2002, Henryk Litwin reviewed the Poland-policy of the Holy See at the beginning of the seventeenth century, explaining that between 1599 and 1601, the king of Poland and Sweden tried to get support from the emperor, Archduke Ferdinand and other princes for his war against Charles Vasa. Litwin, however, emphasised that the correspondence which he had been able to consult did not allow him to assess the involvement of Clement VIII in projects to return Sweden to the obedience of King Sigismund.<sup>572</sup> I have found primary sources which enable me to shed more light on Clement VIII's attitude towards the strife between the Vasa relatives.

The present research mainly relies on two sets of correspondence. Based on primary sources archived in Sweden and Rome, the two chapters will analyse the exchange of letters between Pope Clement VIII and the duke of Södermanland in its entirety. Through the prism of the correspondence between Rome and the nuncio in Poland, this part will also provide information on Clement VIII's perception of the military and political events in the on-going struggle between Sigismund III and Duke Charles. The last section of this introduction explains who was in charge of the correspondence between the Holy See and the nunciature in Warsaw and the degree to which I have been able to reconstruct this exchange of letters.

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<sup>570</sup> Theodor Norlin, *K. Sigismund och Svenska Kyrkan: Första Kapitlet af en Svenska Kyrkans Historia efter Reformationen* (Lund, 1863), p. 151; Daniel Toijer, *Sverige och Sigismund (1598–1600): Fördraget i Linköping – Riksdagen i Linköping* (Published Ph.D thesis, Stockholm, 1930), p. 40 (footnote 2).

<sup>571</sup> Oskar Garstein, *Rome and the Counter-Reformation in Scandinavia until the Establishment of the S. Congregatio De Propaganda Fide in 1622*, vol. II (1583–1622) (Oslo, 1980), pp. 239, 489 (endnote 24).

<sup>572</sup> Henryk Litwin, 'La Repubblica di Polonia nella politica europea di Roma nei primi anni del XVII secolo attraverso l'opera dei nunzi pontifici (1599–1621)', in Gaetano Platania (ed.), *Politica e religione nell'Europa centro-orientale (sec. XVI–XX)* (Viterbo, 2002), pp. 135–136.

At the Holy See, Cardinal San Giorgio – Cinzio Passeri Aldobrandini – was formally in charge of the correspondence with the nunciature in Poland. In 1588–1589 Cinzio Passeri Aldobrandini accompanied his uncle, Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini, on his peace legation to Poland.<sup>573</sup> Cinzio, therefore, was already familiar with the affairs in Poland when, in September 1592, his papal uncle assigned him the correspondence with the Polish nuncio. Dissatisfied with the predominance of his younger cousin, Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini, San Giorgio eventually left the execution of his duties in the papal secretariat of state to his secretary, the later Cardinal Lanfranco Margotti (1558–1611).<sup>574</sup> Therefore, the letters for the nuncio in Poland probably mainly reflect discussions on the Polish-Swedish affairs between Margotti, Cardinal Aldobrandini and Clement VIII. Because they were signed by Cardinal San Giorgio, who was still formally in charge of this nunciature, and for the sake of straightforwardness, I will treat the letters as if they had been written by Cinzio Passeri Aldobrandini. I will need to establish in a more extensive study whether Clement VIII also decided to subject the issues which arose from the struggle between the Vasa relatives to the judgment of the Holy Office. As we will see, the correspondence of the Polish nunciature is incomplete. Therefore, if Clement VIII's Poland and Sweden policy was discussed by the cardinals of the *Sant'Ufficio*, such further research might shed more light on the pope's reaction to the Vasas' struggle and on the directives for the Polish nuncio on how he had to proceed in this affair.

The papal nuncio in Poland, from 1599 onwards, was the bishop of Reggio–Emilia, Claudio Rangoni (1559–1621).<sup>575</sup> The correspondence of Rangoni's important nunciature, however, still awaits a systematic, scholarly edition.<sup>576</sup> The primary source material which I have been able to consult in the *Archivio Doria Pamphilj* and the *Archivio Segreto Vaticano* only allows for a partial reconstruction of this correspondence.

The ink on some of Rangoni's letters is fading away and, 'alas!', as Paul Pierling

<sup>573</sup> Jaitner, 'Il nepotismo', p. 58.

<sup>574</sup> Ibid., pp. 58, 61, 77–78; JAITNER, vol. I, pp. CX–CXVI, CCXLI. For Margotti, see: JAITNER, vol. I, pp. XLIX–LI.

<sup>575</sup> For Rangoni, see: JAITNER, vol. I, pp. CCXL–CCXLI; Leitsch, *Leben*, vol. III, pp. 2107–2110. See also: Walter Leitsch, 'Die Bemühungen Zygmunts III. von Polen um die Kardinalswürde für Claudio Rangoni', *Mitteilungen des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs*, 31 (1978), pp. 41–51.

<sup>576</sup> Rangoni's correspondence will be edited as volume XVII in the *Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae*. See: Henryk Damian Wojtyśka, *Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae*, vol. I (De fontibus eorumque investigatione et editionibus. Instructio ad editionem. Nuntiorum series chronologica) (Rome, 1990), p. 241. Nicolae Buta edited those excerpts of Rangoni's correspondence which related to Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania in: 'I ragguagli di Claudio Rangoni, Vescovo di Reggio–Emilia e Nunzio in Polonia dal 1599–1605: appunti di storia rumena', *Diplomatarium Italicum: Documenti Raccolti negli Archivi Italiani*, 1 (1925), pp. 259–377. Buta also included letters from Rangoni's correspondence in an edition of *avvisi*; in a few instances, Buta edited passages in which these sources referred to Duke Charles, Sweden or Livonia: Nicolae Buta, 'I paesi romeni in una serie di "avvisi" della fine del cinquecento (1599–1603)', *Diplomatarium Italicum: Documenti Raccolti negli Archivi Italiani*, 2 (1930), pp. 72–304.

lamented already in 1901, these letters 'will soon fall silent for ever'.<sup>577</sup> For the year 1600, I was only able to locate letters of Rangoni to Cardinal San Giorgio written in February and March.<sup>578</sup> A fragment of Cardinal San Giorgio's register of letters to Rangoni of the same year, on the other hand, only spans from 25 March to 30 December.<sup>579</sup> For 1601, I only found the letters of Rangoni to San Giorgio (January to September and one in December) but none of the cardinal's replies.<sup>580</sup> The correspondence of 1602 is better preserved. The *Fondo Borghese* in the Vatican Secret Archives holds a register of letters to Nuncio Rangoni for the year of 1602.<sup>581</sup> Moreover, it contains duplicates of Rangoni's letters for San Giorgio as well as of other documents relating to Polish affairs, which the nuncio forwarded to Pietro Aldobrandini, the more influential of the two cardinal-nephews.<sup>582</sup>

For as much as the unfortunately incomplete correspondence between Rangoni and San Giorgio allows, this part offers insight into the reaction of King Sigismund and Clement VIII to Duke Charles's letters for the pontiff. The two chapters in this part situate the response in Rome and in Warsaw to Duke Charles's letters for the pope within the wider context of the events surrounding the conflict between the Vasa relatives. They establish the extent to which these events influenced the pontiff, Duke Charles and King Sigismund in their political and military decisions. The last section in Chapter 8 will use Clement VIII's general instruction for Rangoni in order to place the correspondence between Duke Charles and the pope within the pontiff's religio-political strategies for Poland and Sweden. This part shows what role Duke Charles expected Clement VIII to be willing to fulfil as the spiritual leader of Christendom. It also highlights to what degree the supreme pontiff actually considered Duke Charles's request to promote peace between a Catholic king and a Protestant nobleman. Overall, the aim is to explain the pontiff's motives within the wider context of Clement VIII's strategy to protect the Catholic religion in Christendom. The struggle between the Vasa relatives thus will serve for an analysis of Clement VIII's interpretation of his role as peacemaker, as head of the Catholic Church and as the spiritual leader of Christendom.

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<sup>577</sup> Paul Pierling, *La Russie et le Saint-Siège: études diplomatiques*, vol. III (Paris, 1901).

<sup>578</sup> ADP, FA, 4.

<sup>579</sup> ASV, FB, serie IV, 215b.

<sup>580</sup> ADP, FA, 4.

<sup>581</sup> ASV, FB, serie III, 18.

<sup>582</sup> ASV, FB, serie III, 52c.d.



## **Clement VIII, Duke Charles and Sigismund III (1598–1601)**

In late 1599 or early 1600, Clement VIII received an unexpected letter: the Protestant Charles Vasa, duke of Södermanland, Närke and Värmland, contacted the pope about his differences with his Catholic nephew, King Sigismund III of Poland and Sweden.<sup>583</sup> This was the first of three letters which Clement VIII and Duke Charles exchanged in the years of 1599 and 1600. As explained in the introduction to this part, this correspondence has not yet received scholarly attention from the papacy's perspective. As a consequence, an important aspect of Clement VIII's understanding of his role as the spiritual head of Christendom has been neglected in historical research.

This chapter starts with a detailed analysis of Charles Vasa's letter for the pope and explains the duke's potential motives to contact the supreme pontiff. A second subchapter discusses the response of the pope and of King Sigismund to the unexpected mail from Sweden, while the last section of this chapter examines Clement VIII's reply for the duke. This chapter demonstrates that the pope's traditional duties as the spiritual leader of Christendom could be used as a rhetorical tool in diplomatic practice for exploring ideas of a papal intervention in favour of peace between a Protestant subject and his Catholic prince.

### **7.1. Duke Charles's first letter for Clement VIII (1599)**

The Protestant duke of Södermanland sent his first letter to Pope Clement VIII one day after the ides of March 1599,<sup>584</sup> that is on 16 March 1599 Old and 26 March 1599 New Style.<sup>585</sup> This subchapter highlights the differences in the epistolary ceremonial between

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<sup>583</sup> NLS, *MS Engeströmska samlingen*, B I.1.23, ff. 307r–312v: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 16 March 1599 [O.S.]. I am very grateful to the members of staff at the National Library of Sweden who provided me with an electronic copy of this document. Excerpts of this letter are published in: Toijer, *Sverige*, p. 40 (footnote 2).

<sup>584</sup> NLS, *MS Engeströmska samlingen*, B I.1.23, ff. 307r–312v: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 16 March 1599 [O.S.].

<sup>585</sup> Sweden only adopted the Gregorian Calendar in the eighteenth century but introduced 1 January as the start of the new year in 1559.

Duke Charles's and King James VI's letter for Clement VIII. It explains by what strategy the duke tried to convince the pope to comply with the request of his missive and discusses the possible motives of Charles Vasa to contact the pope on his conflict with King Sigismund.

Duke Charles greeted Clement VIII with the salutation 'Sanctissime Romanae Catholicae Ecclesiae Summe Pontifex et Pater, Domine Reverendissime'<sup>586</sup> and throughout the missive, the duke addressed the pope as 'Vestra Pontificia Sanctitas'.<sup>587</sup> Giora Sternberg and Toby Osborne demonstrated that titles of address and forms of salutation constituted a means to recognise or to decline status in correspondence (see Chapter 4.1.). Therefore a study on letters of Protestants to popes would be useful for evaluating to which degree Duke Charles's salutation and address conformed to the epistolary practice of other non-Catholics in their correspondence with a pope.

In particular, how common was it for a Protestant to refer to the Church of Rome as the 'Catholic', that is, the 'universal' or 'all-encompassing' and, in the second meaning of the term, 'orthodox', Church?<sup>588</sup> Moreover, how usual was it for Protestants to address a pope as 'Your Pontifical Holiness' and to greet him as 'Most Holy Father and Supreme Pontiff of the Roman Catholic Church'? Which styles did Protestants regard as 'correct' for addressing the pope, that is, how did they acknowledge the pontiff as the bishop of Rome and the head of the Papal States but not as the spiritual head of all Christians? For instance, as Chapter 4 has shown, King James VI/I explained in November 1603 that he had refrained from replying to a brief of Clement VIII because he was unwilling to concede to the pope those titles which the pontiff claimed for himself: King James argued that this would have been against his own conscience and that it would have damaged his reputation among the other Protestant princes.

In any case, Duke Charles certainly did not go to such lengths as James VI of Scotland who, also in 1599, sent – or according to King James was tricked into sending – a letter to Clement VIII. As we have seen, James VI's letter greeted the pope as 'Beatissime Pater' and ended with the subscription 'Beatitudinis vestrae obsequentissimus filius' (see Chapter 4.1.). Although Duke Charles expressed recognition of the pope as the supreme pontiff and most holy father of the Roman Catholic Church, unlike James VI, he did not

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<sup>586</sup> NLS, *MS Engeströmska samlingen*, B I.1.23, f. 307r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 16 March 1599 [O.S.].

<sup>587</sup> Ibid., ff. 307r–309r, 310v–311r, 312r–v. As we have seen in the introduction to this part of the thesis, Duke Charles used different forms of salutation and of address in a second letter in late 1600. See also Chapter 8.

<sup>588</sup> For the meanings of the term 'catholic', see: David Bagchi, 'Old questions, new answers? Luther and the problem of Catholicity', *Reformation*, 17 (2012), pp. 163–164.

suggest that he recognised Clement VIII as 'his' father: in his subscription, Charles Vasa did not refer to himself as the pope's 'most submitting' or 'very complying son'. Instead, the duke simply recommended or entrusted Clement VIII to the blessing of the Lord ('Vestramq(ue) Pont(ificiam) Sanc(tita)tem Divinae benedictioni commendamus').<sup>589</sup>

Evidently, the duke did not intend to arouse Clement VIII's hope that he considered converting to the Catholic faith. Also, in the letter, the duke neither professed any inclination towards the Catholic faith nor did he promise to help improve the situation of the Catholics in Sweden. The pope certainly would not have been deceived by such promises anyway. Clement VIII was well-informed about Duke Charles's involvement in anti-Catholic measures in Sweden. In 1596, for example, he had heard of the expulsion of the 'Sacred Virgins of Saint Bridget' from their convent in late 1595, something which, the pope complained, none of the 'heretical kings' had dared to do before Duke Charles.<sup>590</sup> Moreover, merely one month before the duke of Södermanland penned his letter for the pope, Clement had still referred to him as a 'most obstinate heretic' in his instruction for Nuncio Rangoni.<sup>591</sup> Why then did Charles contact the pontiff if he did not intend to deceive Clement VIII about his religious convictions?

The duke started his letter by saying that he offered the pope his zeal, or devotion, and services ('Nostra studia et officia').<sup>592</sup> This offer of devotion, again, did certainly not aim at suggesting that the duke had any particular sympathies towards the Catholic faith and Church. These non-committal, polite words should be simply read as a sign of good will and respect from prince to prince and they were undoubtedly also understood as such in Rome. The objective of Charles's letter was certainly unusual enough and required a demonstration of good will. It also required reaching into the bag of rhetorical tricks.

In his letter, the duke of Södermanland appealed to Clement VIII's duty to care for peace in his role as the spiritual head of Christendom. Duke Charles wished the pope to know that letters and fame had brought him reports of Clement VIII's extraordinary dedication to peace in the commonwealths of Christendom. The duke also knew that Clement wished to see peace restored in Christendom so that all military forces could be united against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>593</sup> Charles Vasa thus addressed two issues which were

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<sup>589</sup> NLS, *MS Engeströmska samlingen*, B I.1.23, f. 312v: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 16 March 1599 [O.S.].

<sup>590</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, pp. 447–448. For the dissolution of the Brigittine Convent, see: Garstein, *Rome*, vol. II, pp. 205–209, 225.

<sup>591</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, pp. 599. For a comment on the measures against the Swedish Catholics, see for example: *ibid.*, pp. 447–448.

<sup>592</sup> NLS, *MS Engeströmska samlingen*, B I.1.23, f. 307r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 16 March 1599 [O.S.].

<sup>593</sup> *Ibid.*, f. 307r–v.

closely associated with the role of the pope as the spiritual leader of Christendom. Presumably, the duke was aware that popes generally regarded themselves as supreme peacemakers and -keepers and that they traditionally used the argument that peace in Christendom was a prerequisite for forging a league of Catholic princes in defence of the *respublica christiana* against the 'infidels'. Clement VIII, however, certainly had breathed new life into the pope's 'political' roles as the spiritual head of Christendom

In 1595 and 1597 the Aldobrandini pope had granted a general indulgence for all Catholics who confessed their sins and did penance so that God, in his mercy, would restore peace in Christendom, halt the spreading of heresy and curb the Ottoman threat. The pope ordered the publication of these general indulgences throughout Catholic Christendom.<sup>594</sup> The pontiff himself believed that his efforts to achieve a league against the Ottomans were extraordinary and well known. A papal instruction for a special envoy sent to Poland in 1596 stressed that, 'as it is known to everybody', Clement 'has made more than any of his predecessors had ever done' for achieving the formation of an anti-Ottoman league.<sup>595</sup> Given the large geographical scope of Clement VIII's diplomatic campaign in support of Emperor Rudolf II's anti-Ottoman war and that the pope had sent papal troops to Hungary, it is not surprising that the project also came to Duke Charles's attention.<sup>596</sup> A related matter, which was also very close to the pontiff's heart, had reached the ears of the duke too.

Charles Vasa told Clement VIII that he knew that the pontiff had used his authority and had made peace between the mighty kings of France and Spain. Charles Vasa assured the pope that he had heard with great joy of Clement's efforts and concern to establish this peace which had earned the pontiff the eternal fame of a peacemaker.<sup>597</sup> These were surprisingly gentle, smooth-tongued words, given the duke's stance against the Catholic religion in Sweden. Clearly, the intention of the duke's demonstration of respect and gratitude for Clement VIII's achievements as a peacemaker was to gain the pontiff's good will. Duke Charles probably hoped that his kind words would evoke placidness in the pope which then would serve in his favour as he turned Clement VIII's attention to his nephew, Sigismund Vasa.

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<sup>594</sup> E.g.: Clement VIII, *Jubil Jahr ... Gott den Allmechtigen in gegenwärtiger obligender, der heiligen Catholischen Kirchen Gefahr und Noth, anzuruffen* (Passau, 1595); Clement VIII, *Jubil Jahr ... Gott den Allmechtigen umb Frid der Christlichen Königen und Fürsten, und Hülff in gegenwertigen Nöthen der Christenhey, anzuruffen* (Passau, 1597). These two documents have been made available online by the *Münchener Digitalisierungszentrum* of the *Bayrische Staatsbibliothek* (<http://www.digitale-sammlungen.de>).

<sup>595</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, p. 423.

<sup>596</sup> For these campaigns see: Niederkorn, *Mächte*, pp. 70–102.

<sup>597</sup> NLS, *MS Engeströmska samlingen*, B I.1.23, ff. 307v–308r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 16 March 1599 [O.S.].

Charles not only complemented Clement VIII on his achievements as the *padre comune* and spiritual head of Christendom: he also used them as a rhetorical device to win the pope for his own cause. Sigismund, Duke Charles pointed out, was the king of two realms: Sweden and Poland. These two kingdoms, the duke wished to emphasise, could be a bulwark of the *respublica christiana* against the Tartars and Ottomans. The duke had no doubt that Sigismund was a preeminent member of the Roman Catholic Church whom the pontiff honoured with paternal affection and benevolence. The duke imagined that Clement, by his authority, would be able to convince the king to employ his military forces against these 'barbarian people', to the great advantage of Christendom.

In the previous summer, in 1598, Sigismund's uncle complained, it would have been useful to the service of God if the king had attacked the Ottomans with his costly, foreign mercenary troops. Instead, the duke criticised, Sigismund – incited by the artifices of restless men – chose to lead his military forces into the kingdom of Sweden, which was administered by the regency council in the king's absence. Why Sigismund III would undertake such an expedition, the duke averted, he still did not know. The king's action resulted in great blood shed between Swedes and foreigners. The duke insisted that it was the king who had initiated this 'truly unnecessary war' ('vero bello non necessario') but in the end the quarrels between Sigismund and himself were resolved in an agreement. Sigismund III, however, subsequently sailed back to the kingdom of Poland without notifying Duke Charles and the Swedish Estates of his departure. By doing so, the king exposed his hereditary kingdom to new trouble and further danger.<sup>598</sup> What message did the duke try to convey to the pope here?

At first glance, it would seem that the duke turned the blame for the events of summer and autumn 1598 on King Sigismund: the king had invaded Sweden, the king had employed troops against his Swedish subjects, the king had breached the Treaty of Linköping. As a matter of fact, however, Duke Charles blamed restless men who had given the king bad advice: clearly, he was referring to the Swedish supporters of Sigismund who had fled to the king's court in Warsaw in the years 1596 to 1598 and who had informed him on Charles's proceedings in Sweden in the king's absence. Shifting the blame away from the king to bad advisors had been a long-standing rhetorical practice by the end of the sixteenth century: the loyal subject did not criticise the misjudgements of the ruler but those who steered the ruler to a decision which served the interests of a few individuals rather

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<sup>598</sup> Ibid., ff. 308r–310r.

than the common good.<sup>599</sup> In his letter, Duke Charles therefore presented himself as a loyal subject of the king and, simultaneously, laid grounds for a potential reconciliation with his lord: after all, Sigismund was not really to blame for what had happened. In contrast to the bad advisors of Sigismund, so the message of the letter, Duke Charles had dutifully helped to administer the kingdom in the king's absence and he bore no blame whatsoever. On the contrary, the duke only envisaged the noblest goals for Christendom.

To the pope, the duke expressed his deep concern for the wellbeing of Christendom. He professed his desire that the greatest possible number of soldiers would be able to resist 'the cruelty of the common enemy', the Ottomans; for this reason, he had decided to send the present letter to Clement VIII. Duke Charles hoped that the pontiff would be willing to use his authority for the establishment of concord throughout all kingdoms and provinces. Hopefully, Clement would not spare any effort for this end. The duke deemed that this was also in the interest of the pope who cared for peace in Christendom and the war against the Ottomans. Therefore, Charles Vasa urged Clement VIII to restore the kingdom of Sweden to peace and to preserve it therein. It would benefit the pontiff's objectives for Christendom best, according to the duke of Södermanland, if Clement himself turned Sigismund's attention to the peace and wellbeing of his hereditary kingdom. Moreover, it would be to the pope's advantage if he convinced the king not to listen to restless men anymore: their bad advice caused nothing but harm to the kingdom and disturbed the public tranquillity, as unfortunately had happened in the previous year when Sigismund had turned his army against Sweden.

Sigismund's uncle also promised that there would not be any reason for the king to complain about the duke, the Swedish Estates or the subjects of his native kingdom: they were all 'most willing' ('paratissimi') to subject themselves to their king, as it was proper for loyal subjects and as justice demanded of them. The duke also felt that he needed to stress that he had never been the cause for hostile endeavours against the king.<sup>600</sup> Thus, again, Charles presented himself as a loyal subject of Sigismund. The duke's message was clear: he had been innocent in the past and would remain so in times to come. And, again, he emphasised that this would benefit Sigismund, Clement VIII and Christendom.

The duke repeated that Sigismund III had wasted resources in a war against his own subjects. The king could and should have used these resources for an attack on the Ottomans and to the great benefit of the Christian Republic. If Clement VIII persuaded the

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<sup>599</sup> E.g.: Joel T. Rosenthal, 'The King's "Wicked Advisers" and Medieval baronial rebellions', *Political Science Quarterly*, 82 (1967), pp. 595–618.

<sup>600</sup> NLS, *MS Engeströmska samlingen*, B I.1.23, ff. 310r–312r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 16 March 1599 [O.S.].

king of such plans in the future, he would provide Christendom with a most necessary and useful remedy. The pontiff would acquire eternal praise and fame for his name and, at the same time, he would look after King Sigismund's happiness, welfare and good fortune.<sup>601</sup> Thus, Duke Charles appealed to the pope's sense of duty as the spiritual head of Christendom and to his considerations for his own glory as the protector of the *respublica christiana*. The letter of Charles Vasa demonstrates that the pope's duty to care for peace in Christendom and for its protection against the Ottomans offered a rhetorical device which allowed the Protestant duke to ask the pope for help in settling the conflict between the two Vasa relatives.

In 1863, Theodor Norlin shortly summarised Duke Charles's letter for Pope Clement VIII, saying that the duke of Södermanland had asked the pope for mediation.<sup>602</sup> Oskar Garstein even wrote that Duke Charles had solicited Clement VIII 'for his assistance to arbitrate between Sigismund and his Swedish subjects'.<sup>603</sup> It is, however, necessary to emphasise that Duke Charles did not request any papal mediation or arbitration *expressis verbis*. The duke of Södermanland declared himself ready for a reconciliation with Sigismund, his sovereign, but he did not ask the pontiff to mediate between the two Vasa relatives. Duke Charles only beseeched Clement VIII to exert a moderating influence on King Sigismund and thus wished the pope to help averting further warfare in Sweden and, if possible, to assist in initiating a process of reconciliation by turning the king's mind to peace. Charles Vasa thus acknowledged that the popes considered it their special duty to make peace in Christendom but he did not expect that the pontiff would directly intervene between King Sigismund and the Protestant duke: nowhere in his letter did Charles ask the pope to send an official or secret mediator to King Sigismund and him.

It is noteworthy that the duke did not offer any improvements for the Catholics in Sweden if Clement VIII decided to turn his attention to the conflict between the Vasa relatives. Nor did he even vaguely insinuate that the pope's intervention would further the Catholic cause in Sigismund's native kingdom in any other way. Clearly, the duke had decided not to address his confessional differences with Sigismund and the pope. Instead, Duke Charles presented his request to the pope as a selfless act for the greater good of Christendom: papal intervention would benefit the kingdoms of Sweden and Poland, the Christian republic, King Sigismund and the pope, but not Duke Charles personally. But what were the personal interests of Duke Charles in Clement VIII's involvement in the strife between the two Vasa relatives? What might have been the motives of the duke to

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<sup>601</sup> Ibid., f. 312r–v.

<sup>602</sup> Norlin, *Sigismund*, p. 151.

<sup>603</sup> Garstein, *Rome*, vol. II, p. 239.

send this letter to the pontiff?

Theodor Norlin argued that the duke of Södermanland must have had a strong desire for peace. After all, according to Norlin, the duke asked the very person whom he regarded as 'the Antichrist' to end the conflict.<sup>604</sup> Certainly, it is possible that Charles Vasa honestly wished for a reconciliation with Sigismund. More likely, however, Duke Charles intended to make his nephew desist from attempting another 'invasion' of Sweden. Both of these options would suggest that the duke wished to preserve the *status quo* in Sweden. In other words, King Sigismund would remain the sovereign of his native kingdom, while, *de facto*, his uncle ruled it in the king's name and absence. It is, however, also possible that Duke Charles aimed to prepare the introduction of innovations to the *status quo*.

Duke Charles's letter for the pontiff might also have been 'addressed' to Sigismund's Swedish subjects. The duke could stress that he really was not at the root of his strife with their sovereign and that he even deigned himself to implore the arch-enemy of the Lutheran Church, the pope in Rome, to help him restore concord. In that case, the letter would have served as an exculpation for whatever actions Charles intended to undertake against Sigismund next: the king's stubborn intransigence forced the duke to take special measures for the greater good of the kingdom. Lastly, the duke might have intended to deceive the king, hoping that Sigismund would trust him and join an anti-Ottoman league. This would have allowed the duke to take advantage of Sigismund's distraction in the war against the Ottomans and to extend his authority to the Swedish places loyal to the king by means of military conquest. Whatever reasons might have moved the duke of Södermanland to contact Clement VIII, subsequent events in Sweden seemingly undermined the chances that the pope would consider intervening with Sigismund in favour of a reconciliation with Duke Charles: in July 1599, the Swedish Estates formally renounced their allegiance to their sovereign, King Sigismund of Sweden.<sup>605</sup> King Sigismund lost his native kingdom.

## **7.2. The response to Duke Charles's letter in Rome and Warsaw (1600)**

Chapter 6 demonstrated that after the peace of Vervins, the prince-elector-archbishop of Cologne wished Clement VIII to use his authority for the pacification of Flanders. The previous subchapter, in turn, highlighted that Clement VIII's dedication to peace in Christendom and to the war against the Ottomans was also well known outside of the Catholic world. Clement's endeavours were perceived as such that even the Protestant

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<sup>604</sup> Norlin, *Sigismund*, p. 151.

<sup>605</sup> Stone, *State*, p. 140; Garstein, *Rome*, vol. II, p. 239.



Charles Vasa felt that he could appeal to the pope to fulfil his duties as the spiritual head of the *respublica christiana*. This subchapter analyses the response of Clement VIII and Sigismund III to Charles's letter in general before the last subchapter will pay closer attention to the pope's eventual reply for the duke.

In 1980, Oskar Garstein argued that the deposition of King Sigismund by the Swedish Estates in July 1599 signified that the *riksdag* acted '[b]efore the Pope had time to decline the offer, as he did very diplomatically through his Nuncio in Poland'.<sup>606</sup> Did Clement really reject Duke Charles's appeal to his duty to care for peace in Sigismund's realms? Oskar Garstein referenced one primary and one secondary source as the basis of his assertion.<sup>607</sup> Garstein's secondary source was Theodor Norlin's *K. Sigismund och Svenska Kyrkan* (1863). Contrary to Garstein's assertion, however, Norlin explicitly stated that Clement VIII, whom Duke Charles must have regarded as 'the Antichrist', replied via his nuncio in Poland and 'testified his desire that peace might be concluded between Sweden and Poland'. Norlin continued that the pope's letter is only known through a reply which Duke Charles had sent to Clement VIII from Wittenstein on 11 December 1600.<sup>608</sup> Clearly, the document which Norlin consulted in Stockholm was a minute or an entry into a register of the same letter of which, as we have seen in the introduction to this part, the *Archivio Doria Pamphilj* preserve a copy in the *Fondo Aldobrandini*.<sup>609</sup>

As reference for this minute or copy of Duke Charles's second letter to Clement VIII, Norlin simply noted 'I riksarkivet, Acta hist.'. <sup>610</sup> More than a century later, Oskar Garstein traced Norlin's vague reference to a letter of Duke Charles which the Swedish National Archives, the *riksarkivet*, preserve in the series *riksregistraturet*. The letter which Garstein found, however, was not addressed to the pope but to a hitherto unidentified certain 'Ladevilus Junior': clearly, this document was not the missive for Clement VIII to which Norlin had referred in his study. Garstein based his assertion that Clement VIII had rejected the ducal offer on this letter of Duke Charles to 'Ladevilus Junior'.

In an endnote, Garstein wrote: 'The Pope's answer through Claudio Rangoni, the Nuncio to Poland, is known from a missive from Duke Charles to Ladevilus Junior, dated Wittensten 11 December 1600'.<sup>611</sup> As a matter of fact, however, in this letter, the duke of Södermanland mentioned neither a reply of the pope nor the nuncio nor a papal envoy at

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<sup>606</sup> Garstein, *Rome*, vol. II, p. 239.

<sup>607</sup> Ibid., p. 489 (endnote 24).

<sup>608</sup> Norlin's exact words were: "'Antikrist" svarade emellertid genom sin nuntie i Polen, Karl Rongo [sic!], och betygade sin önskan att fred måtte ingås mellan Sverige och Polen. Vi känna detta bref blott af hertigens svar, dat. Wittensten den 11 Dec. 1600.' Norlin, *Sigismund*, p. 151.

<sup>609</sup> ADP, FA, 21, f. 105r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S.].

<sup>610</sup> Norlin, *Sigismund*, p. 151 (footnote 2).

<sup>611</sup> Garstein, *Rome*, vol. II, p. 489 (endnote 24).

all.<sup>612</sup> manifestly, Garstein misread Norlin's statement that the pope desired the conclusion of peace between the two Vasa relatives, found the wrong primary source and then misrepresented its content.

Furthermore, the author of *Rome and the Counter-Reformation in Scandinavia* argued that 'Pope Clement VIII could hardly have been in a position to accept Duke Charles's invitation to arbitrate between the contesting parties, since *officially* he had no knowledge of Sigismund's defeat at Stångebro'. In a letter to the pope, Garstein continued, Sigismund explained why he had left Sweden in late 1598 but he neither informed Clement VIII on his military defeat at Stångebro nor did he mention that he was no longer able to exert his rule as king in Sweden. Garstein deemed King Sigismund's letter for the pope as 'a document of deceit' and that, on purpose, the king did not provide Clement with any 'official information of the King's plight'. Therefore, Garstein concluded that 'any effort on the part of Duke Charles to procure the assistance of the Pope could hardly have been acknowledged, let alone be acted upon, by the Sovereign Pontiff'.<sup>613</sup>

This subchapter – and the remainder of this thesis more generally – demonstrates that *the* standard work in English on the response of the Holy See to the Reformation in Scandinavia is unfortunately inaccurate in its discussion of the papacy's attitude towards the confessional and dynastic struggle in Sweden. In as much as the dispersed nuncio correspondence allows, this subchapter highlights that Clement VIII was well-informed on the strife between the Vasa relatives and that the nuncio in Poland discussed them with the king in audiences. It analyses the response of King Sigismund to Duke Charles's letter and contextualises the king's reaction within the political and military events surrounding the on-going struggle between the monarch and his uncle. The aim is to rectify Oskar Garstein's misrepresentation of the involvement of the papacy in the Vasas' conflict.

Nuncio Claudio Rangoni arrived in Warsaw on 1 August 1599 but, as I explained in the introduction, the earliest pieces of Rangoni's correspondence which I have been able to locate are letters which the nuncio issued in February 1600.<sup>614</sup> By this time, Clement VIII had already received Duke Charles's letter of March 1599. On Sunday, 20 February 1600, Nuncio Rangoni reported to the Cardinal-Nephew San Giorgio that he had informed

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<sup>612</sup> Garstein, providing the reference 'Riksregistraturet 1600', recorded the year rather than the volume number in his endnote (see *ibid*). Moreover, as will be explained later in this thesis (see Chapter 8.1.), Duke Charles almost certainly sent this letter to Christoph 'the Younger' Radziwiłł. The correct reference therefore is: SNA, *Riksregistraturet*, 91, ff. 360v–361r: Duke Charles to Christoph 'the Younger' Radziwiłł, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S.]. I thank the Swedish National Archives for locating the correct document and for providing me with an electronic copy. I also thank Prof Steve Murdoch, Dr Alexia Grosjean and Dr Birgitte Dedenroth-Schou for assuring me that neither the pope, the nuncio nor any papal envoy are mentioned in this letter.

<sup>613</sup> Garstein, *Rome*, vol. II, p. 239.

<sup>614</sup> Leitsch, *Leben*, vol. III, pp. 2108.

Sigismund III of the letter which Duke Charles had written to the pope. The nuncio told the king 'precisely as much as His Holiness had ordered'.<sup>615</sup> Thus, even if, as Garstein argued, King Sigismund had not officially informed Clement VIII on the troubles which he had been experiencing in Sweden, the pope still ordered the nuncio to discuss Charles's letter with the king. What the pontiff's exact instructions were, we do not know because of the gap in the documentation in the nuncio correspondence. Yet, at least there is an indication of the approximate date on which the Holy See likely penned its orders for Rangoni and thus by when Clement had received Duke Charles's letter more or less.

The nuncio's correspondence shows that, normally, it took around one month's time for a letter from Rome to arrive in Warsaw. The nuncio related that he had received San Giorgio's letter on Monday, 14 February.<sup>616</sup> Therefore, at the latest by mid-January 1600, Clement VIII must have received Duke Charles's letter, decided to seize the opportunity which it offered and ordered San Giorgio to instruct Rangoni on how the pope wished him to proceed at the Polish court. In a brief of 15 January 1600, Clement VIII asked King Sigismund III to trust Rangoni entirely in a certain business which the nuncio had to discuss with the king.<sup>617</sup> It seems most likely that the matter to which the brief referred related to the strife between the two Vasa relatives. If that was the case, then the aim of the brief must have been to confirm to Sigismund III that the nuncio consulted him on his opinion on Duke Charles's letter by express command of Clement VIII. In any case, on 20 February, Rangoni informed the curia on the preliminary outcome of his endeavours.

Sigismund III, the nuncio related, was amazed 'that this man had sent such a letter'. The king emphasised that he had always been well aware of Clement VIII's good will for him and appreciated it in this instance in particular and therefore wanted to thank the pope for his kindness. For the duke of Södermanland, on the other hand, Sigismund did not find any kind words: the king considered 'the duke his uncle as a man who can be trusted little or rather not at all'. Had his uncle really longed for concord, the monarch asserted, he would not have been able to find a better means than Clement to work for it.<sup>618</sup> Thus King Sigismund shared in Duke Charles's flattery and praise of Clement VIII as a peacemaker and seemed to agree that, in principle, the recourse of his Protestant uncle to the supreme pontiff had been adequate. Chances for a reconciliation between the two Vasa princes, however, were low by 1600: in 1599 the Swedish Estates had deposed Sigismund as king of Sweden and the duke of Södermanland started to assert his rule in the duchy of Finland

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<sup>615</sup> ADP, *FA*, 4, f. 20r: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 20 Feb 1600.

<sup>616</sup> Ibid.

<sup>617</sup> ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 44, f. 29v (no. 20): Clement VIII to Sigismund III, 15 Jan 1600.

<sup>618</sup> ADP, *FA*, 4, f. 20r: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 20 Feb 1600.

and in Estonia.

When Sigismund III and Rangoni discussed Duke Charles's letter for the pope in February 1600, the king highlighted the active role of the duke in his dethronement. Sigismund stressed that it was the duke of Södermanland who had convoked the Swedish Estates (*riksdag*) and made them deprive the king of all his royal rights in Sweden. Sigismund III also instructed the nuncio to inform or remind the pope that Duke Charles had imposed a deadline of six months on the king's son, Prince Ladislas (ruled as king of Poland 1632–1648), within which the prince had to take 'possession of his father's kingdom'. The prince had to stay in Sweden and to receive an education 'in its customs and in the false religion'.<sup>619</sup> Indeed, after Sigismund had failed to regain control over Sweden in his military campaign in 1598, the Swedish Estates deposed the King in July 1599 and promised the Swedish throne to the four-year-old Prince Ladislas upon the condition that he embraced Lutheranism.<sup>620</sup> Sigismund had to reply within six months, and Ladislas had to arrive in Sweden within a further six months. Sigismund III's response to this 'offer' was not to reply at all.<sup>621</sup> The king did not have any illusions regarding the intentions of his uncle. As Sigismund explained to Rangoni in February 1600, he suspected that Charles would resolve to make himself king in the course of the year.<sup>622</sup> Truly, at this time, Duke Charles only had to stretch out his hand for the Swedish crown.

In March 1600, the Swedish Estates decided to exclude Sigismund's heirs from the succession to the Swedish throne, given that the *riksdag* had not heard from the king within the stipulated six months. The *riksdag* also decided to exclude Sigismund's half-brother John (1589–1618) from the succession. Duke Charles who was next in the line of succession, however, only allowed himself to be appointed as regent (*riksföreståndare*) 'for life on behalf of a monarchy for the time being in abeyance'. The duke justified his rejection of the Swedish crown with the fact that, even though Sigismund had not sent any reply, the deadline for Prince Ladislas had not yet expired: in March 1600, the prince still had up to five months to arrive within the prescribed time period of twelve months.<sup>623</sup> The duke only accepted the Swedish crown four years later, in 1604, and only after Sigismund's half-brother John had formally renounced his claims to the throne.<sup>624</sup>

In his audience with the nuncio in February 1600, the Polish king listed all misdeeds which his uncle had committed since 1599: Sigismund III complained to Rangoni that

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<sup>619</sup> Ibid., f. 20r–v.

<sup>620</sup> Stone, *State*, p. 140.

<sup>621</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, pp. 385, 387.

<sup>622</sup> ADP, *FA*, 4, f. 20v: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 20 Feb 1600.

<sup>623</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, pp. 387–388.

<sup>624</sup> Ibid., pp. 330–331, 385, 387–388, 404–408.

Duke Charles had taken control over Kalmar, subjugated Finland, occupied territories in Estonia and killed those individuals who had remained loyal to the king and confiscated their goods.<sup>625</sup> What had happened? Kalmar, a Baltic sea town in south-eastern Sweden, was Sigismund's place of disembarkment when he tried to regain his kingdom in summer 1598; as we have seen in the introduction, Kalmar was also the king's point of departure when he returned or escaped to Danzig in October 1598 after he had suffered a military defeat at the hands of his uncle.<sup>626</sup> In mid-May 1599, two months after he had written his letter for the pope, Charles besieged Kalmar and captured the fortress from the garrison which Sigismund III had left in charge. By doing so, the duke closed an important gate for Sigismund's potential re-entry into Sweden. The officers in charge in Kalmar were decapitated as traitors. In Finland, the adherents of Sigismund III awaited the same fate when, in September and October 1599, the duke conquered the Finnish places which were loyal to the king. During his uncle's campaign in Finland, Sigismund sent a fleet to Sweden in an abortive attempt to regain control over his lost kingdom. Towards the end of October 1599, on the other hand, followers of Duke Charles seized Narva, a town in Estonia, from Sigismund III and in early 1600 'his troops began to overrun the country'.<sup>627</sup>

Estonia, a northern province of the historic region of Livonia, had been an apple of discord between Poland and Sweden ever since the two kingdoms had expelled the Muscovites from the area in 1582.<sup>628</sup> The Swedes had managed to establish their rule in Estonia, supported by the 'Protestant burghers and German nobility'.<sup>629</sup> During the negotiations which preceded Sigismund's election as king of Poland in 1587, the Polish-Lithuanian delegates therefore asked that Estonia would be returned to Poland. In the end, all parties agreed that the issue should be resolved once Sigismund III became king of Sweden.<sup>630</sup> However, only on 12 March 1600, when Estonia was under attack from Charles's troops, Sigismund decided to cede the province, which he deemed to have inherited as king of Sweden, to the elective crown of Poland-Lithuania.<sup>631</sup>

Sigismund hoped that, in return for the cession of Estonia from the Swedish to the Polish crown, he would receive the support of the Poles for reconquering his native kingdom, Sweden, or at least that they would help him to retain control over Estonia.<sup>632</sup>

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<sup>625</sup> ADP, *FA*, 4, f. 20r: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 20 Feb 1600.

<sup>626</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, pp. 379–380, 383, 386.

<sup>627</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 386–387.

<sup>628</sup> Davies, *Playground*, p. 338; Oakley, *War*, pp. 27–41. See also: Walter Leitsch, *Sigismund III. von Polen und Jan Zamoyski: Die Rolle Estlands in der Rivalität zwischen König und Hetman* (Vienna, 2006), *passim*.

<sup>629</sup> Davies, *Playground*, p. 338.

<sup>630</sup> Stone, *State*, p. 132.

<sup>631</sup> Leitsch, *Leben*, vol. II, p. 719.

<sup>632</sup> Walter Platzhoff, *Geschichte des europäischen Staatensystems (1559–1660)* (Munich, 1968 ed.), p. 119.

The king's measure, however, was to no avail: the Polish diet (*Sejm*) was not willing to fight for Estonia even after the province had formally become part of Poland.<sup>633</sup> Thus Sigismund III failed to transform the defence of his interests as the king of Sweden into the cause of his Polish subjects. And Sigismund III completely estranged his (former) subjects in Sweden. After the cession of Estonia, as Walter Leitsch conjectured, 'Sigismund would not have had any prospects on a return to the Swedish throne even if he had been the last living Vasa and even if he had converted to the Lutheran faith'.<sup>634</sup> When, on 24 March 1600, Reval (modern-day Tallinn) defected to the duke of Södermanland, the king of Sweden also lost the last bit of his father's inheritance.<sup>635</sup>

When Sigismund discussed the political and military events in Sweden and Estonia in his conversation with Nuncio Rangoni in February 1600, he concluded that the deeds of his uncle had revealed his true ambition and character. The king deemed the acts of Duke Charles as 'excesses from which it is possible to perceive clearly ... the awful and fraudulent nature of this man'.<sup>636</sup> Had the duke of Södermanland truly wished to be reconciled with his king, he should have shown more patience and should not have promoted innovations in Sweden after he had written to the pope.<sup>637</sup> The Vasa king thus outlined to Rangoni that the duke's profession for concord did not coincide with his actions. Sigismund III also offered an interpretation of Duke Charles's motives to contact the pope.

When the king learnt from Rangoni that his uncle had sent a letter to Clement VIII, Sigismund III laughed and pointed out that Duke Charles was astute and knew that the king intended to reintroduce the Catholic religion in Sweden. He therefore wondered whether the duke wanted to use this intention for irritating the Swedish Lutherans against the king. Sigismund III conjectured that Duke Charles maybe wanted the pope to intervene 'so that he could use this occasion' and tell the Swedish Lutherans 'see, it is true that the king aims to introduce a new religion in the kingdom and has induced the pope to send somebody here'.<sup>638</sup>

In February 1600, Rangoni related that, after a couple of days of reflection, King Sigismund readdressed the duke's epistle in an audience and suspected that the duke of Södermanland maybe feared that the king would return to Sweden with an army. After all, when the duke wrote his letter to Pope Clement VIII in Kalmar in March 1599, the town was still controlled by the king and could have served as Sigismund's disembarking point

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<sup>633</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, p. 387.

<sup>634</sup> Leitsch, *Leben*, vol. II, p. 720.

<sup>635</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, p. 387.

<sup>636</sup> ADP, *FA*, 4, f. 20v: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 20 Feb 1600.

<sup>637</sup> Ibid., f. 20r.

<sup>638</sup> Ibid.

for re-conquering his kingdom. It was therefore likely, according to Sigismund III, that Duke Charles had recourse to the pope's authority out of fear and not because he longed for peace. In the meantime, as Sigismund had explained extensively to the nuncio, the situation in Sweden had changed. The duke had established his rule in the kingdom to such a degree that Sigismund did not know how there could be any hope that the pope's authority could be of any use. And yet, in spite of his doubts and causes for distrust, Sigismund III was not opposed to the idea of a papal intervention for peace.

The king told Rangoni that he referred everything to the pope's prudence and opinion. If Clement VIII deemed that it would be advantageous to intervene in the conflict and to send someone, then the king would not decline such an offer of the pope.<sup>639</sup> As mentioned earlier, Duke Charles himself only had requested Clement VIII to use his authority with King Sigismund in order to turn the king's thoughts and actions to peace and concord. King Sigismund III, however, referred to 'a mandate of His Holiness' and the option that Clement would 'intervene in whatever manner' and 'send a person there'.<sup>640</sup> This clearly indicates that the nuncio in Poland had received the task to sound out whether Sigismund would welcome some sort of papal mediation between Sigismund and his uncle. As the next subchapter will show, Clement VIII offered to do even more than the duke had requested explicitly.

### **7.3. Clement VIII's brief for Duke Charles (1600)**

The correspondence between Claudio Rangoni and Cardinal San Giorgio has revealed that King Sigismund responded sceptically to the declarations of his uncle that he was an obedient subject of the king who had only the best intentions for Sigismund and the kingdom of Sweden. Indeed, the king's deposition in Sweden and Duke Charles's invasion of Estonia did not suggest that the duke seriously longed for an improvement of his relations with Sigismund. The letters of Rangoni highlight that the pope was informed on the military and political situation in which King Sigismund found himself in the Swedish affairs. They also indicate that despite – or exactly because of – the king's plight, Clement considered responding to Duke Charles's appeal to the pope's care for peace in Christendom. This subchapter demonstrates that, as a matter of fact, the pope even decided that he should explore a reconciliation between the two Vasa relatives and that he should send somebody to Charles. This becomes apparent from letters of Cardinal San Giorgio to the nuncio and from a brief of Clement VIII for the duke. These sources thus will highlight

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<sup>639</sup> Ibid., f. 20r–v.

<sup>640</sup> Ibid., f. 20v.

that although the Aldobrandini pontiff refused to make peace between Catholic and Protestant sovereigns in formal diplomatic negotiations, the pope was willing to reconcile a Catholic ruler with his Protestant subject in direct but informal negotiations.

In early April 1600 Cardinal San Giorgio complained to the nuncio that in matters relating to 'the mission of Sweden, His Holiness would have wanted that the king had not confined himself to the discourse which he had held but that he would have declared [his wishes or intentions] more clearly'.<sup>641</sup> Evidently, the pope had offered to Sigismund that he would attempt to reconcile the two Vasa princes. In Rome, however, King Sigismund's reply to Rangoni was apparently conceived as too general and the pope was not sure what the king wished and expected him to do. San Giorgio therefore asked the bishop of Reggio–Emilia to obtain a declaration from Sigismund III in which he stated clearly what course of action he wished Clement VIII to take. The cardinal–nephew underlined that this affair, and Sigismund's interests in it, were extremely important to Clement VIII; the pope had even decided to ponder over it himself.<sup>642</sup> Clement VIII did not offer his intervention light-heartedly.

The pope considered a papal diplomatic intervention between Duke Charles and King Sigismund a double-edged sword. Cardinal San Giorgio explained to Rangoni that, on the one hand, Clement did not wish to commence a mission which could be regarded as imprudent. On the other hand, the pope also did not want to deprive Sigismund of an occasion which might serve the interests of the king.<sup>643</sup> Thus Clement VIII feared that he could harm his and the Holy See's reputation if he decided to send somebody on a mission which was likely to fail and which aimed at reconciling a Protestant prince with his Catholic king. At the same time, however, he also felt that he should take such a risk if there was at least some chance of a positive outcome for Sigismund III.

Unfortunately, bundle four of the *Fondo Aldobrandini* does not contain Rangoni's answer to the complaint that King Sigismund had replied too vaguely to Clement's offer to send some sort of a peace mission to Poland and Sweden. Manifestly, however, Rangoni had managed to retrieve the desired information. On 10 June 1600, Cardinal San Giorgio wrote to Rangoni that Clement VIII was 'most disposed' to dispatch somebody to the duke of Södermanland in order to find an agreement between the two Vasa relatives since King Sigismund would 'desire or appreciate' such a papal intervention. Cardinal San Giorgio explained to the Polish nuncio that Clement wanted to protect his emissary to the duke from danger and injury before the pontiff charged him with a mission. The pope therefore had

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<sup>641</sup> ASV, *FB, serie IV*, 215b, f. 177v: San Giorgio to Rangoni, 8 April 1600.

<sup>642</sup> Ibid.

<sup>643</sup> Ibid., ff. 177v–178r.



decided to ask the duke for a safe-conduct in a brief which Cardinal San Giorgio enclosed to the letter for the nuncio. Rangoni received the charge to ensure that the brief reached its addressee as well as to obtain a reply from Duke Charles. The nuncio was used as an intermediary because, as Cardinal San Giorgio explained, in Rome, they did not know by which means the brief could be sent safely to the duke and even less how they could obtain a confirmation that it had been delivered.<sup>644</sup> Like San Giorgio's letter for Rangoni, Clement VIII's brief for the duke of Södermanland was issued on 10 June 1600.<sup>645</sup>

As far as I can see, no researcher has yet found the original of Clement VIII's brief but, fortunately, the Vatican Secret Archives preserve a copy of it in the *Armadio XLIV*, the register of papal briefs for the year 1600.<sup>646</sup> As early as 1863, as we have seen, Theodor Norlin was aware that the pope had sent a brief to Charles Vasa because the duke replied to it in a letter in December 1600.<sup>647</sup> Ludwig von Pastor, who was familiar both with the religious and political tumults in Sweden as well as with the register of papal briefs in the *Archivio Segreto Vaticano*, overlooked the importance of this brief. Otherwise, he would certainly have used it in his apology on the history of the papacy and would not have stopped his account with Sigismund's departure from Sweden in 1598.<sup>648</sup> Oskar Garstein also used the *Armadio XLIV* but the bibliography in his volume reveals that he did not consult the register of briefs issued in 1599 and 1600.<sup>649</sup> Had he done so, he would certainly not have concluded that Clement VIII had rejected Duke Charles's attempt at a rapprochement. In 1997, a summary of the brief for Duke Charles was published in Latin. The editors, however, did not provide any annotations and, consequently, there is no indication on the significance of this brief, a brief which offered the pope's direct involvement in peace negotiations across confessional boundaries.<sup>650</sup>

In briefs for Catholics, as we have seen in Chapter 4, the pope normally greeted the recipient with a salutation such as 'Dilecte fili nobilis vir salutem' or 'Carissime in Christo fili nostro salutem', followed by the blessing 'et Apostolicam benedictionem'. Clement, however, sent his brief of 10 June 1600 simply to 'Nobilio viro Carolo, Sudermanniae et Nericiae Duci' and greeted Charles Vasa with the salutation 'Nobilis Dux, lumen divinae gratiae'.<sup>651</sup> Thus, Clement VIII refrained from calling Duke Charles his 'beloved son' and,

<sup>644</sup> Ibid., ff. 189v–190r: San Giorgio to Rangoni, 10 June 1600.

<sup>645</sup> ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 44, ff. 153v–154v (no. 163): Clement VIII to Duke Charles, 10 June 1600.

<sup>646</sup> Ibid.

<sup>647</sup> Norlin, *Sigismund*, p. 151.

<sup>648</sup> Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIV, pp. 81–109.

<sup>649</sup> Garstein, *Rome*, vol. II, pp. 546–547, 550.

<sup>650</sup> Luigi Nanni and Tomislav Mrkonjić (eds.), *Epistolae ad Principes*, vol. III (Sixtus V – Clemens VIII (1585–1605)) (Vatican City, 1997), p. 507 (no. 13521).

<sup>651</sup> ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 44, f. 153v: Clement VIII to Duke Charles, 10 June 1600.

instead of bestowing his apostolic blessing upon the duke, the pope wished that Charles would receive the 'light of the divine grace'. From these indicators, scholars familiar with the rhetoric and epistolary practice of the Holy See but unfamiliar with the duke's religious background would still be able to infer that this brief was not destined for a Catholic prince.

In his brief, Clement VIII first explained that he was replying to the letter which Duke Charles had written in Kalmar, one day after the ides of March of the previous year (16 March 1599). Clement asserted that he answered this late because he had only received the letter a few days earlier.<sup>652</sup> The pontiff was clearly stretching the truth here: as we have seen, the pope had already received the ducal missive at the latest by mid-January 1600. Clement VIII's little lie, however, allowed the pontiff to present his brief as a spontaneous reply in favour of peace. It probably aimed to hide the fact that the brief was a result of careful considerations and of preceding consultations with King Sigismund. After all, the pope did not want to undermine Sigismund's negotiating position by leaving the impression that the king was too desirous of peace.

Next, the brief summarised the letter of Duke Charles. Clement VIII reminded the duke that he had expressed his zeal for the peace and tranquillity of Sweden as well as for the wellbeing of the entire Christian republic. The duke had also declared that he acknowledged Sigismund as his king and lord – as it behoved him to do ('ut par est'), the pope added. The duke of Södermanland had written that he was willing to show Sigismund every obedience and submission as it befitted him as a loyal subject of the king. Charles, Clement VIII continued, then expressed his chief wish and desire that Sigismund, together with other Christian rulers, would turn his military forces against the common enemy of Christendom. For these reasons, Clement VIII recapitulated, Duke Charles had beseeched the pope to use his authority with King Sigismund in order to make him stop listening to the advice of restless men and so that the king dedicated himself to the peace and wellbeing of his Swedish Kingdom. By doing so, the duke had argued, the pope would eradicate the root of dissent and discord between Charles and Sigismund.<sup>653</sup>

In his letter to the pope, as emphasised earlier, Duke Charles had not asked for any direct intervention between the two Vasa relatives by means of a papal peace mission. The summary of Charles's letter in Clement VIII's brief suggests that the pope did not (mis-)read any such request into the ducal missive. Evidently, the proposition which followed next in the brief had originated in Rome. The pope asserted that he, too, greatly desired tranquillity and quietude for the kingdoms of Sigismund and for the king himself. Clement

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<sup>652</sup> Ibid.

<sup>653</sup> Ibid., ff. 153v–154r.

declared that his desire was moved by his paternal love for King Sigismund as well as by his pastoral care for Christendom in general and for the kingdoms of Sigismund in particular. Consequently, he would gladly fulfil his duties and intervene by his authority. The pope hoped that the cause of the controversies between the duke and the king could be permanently removed and that peace and concord could be restored between them.

For the above reasons, Clement VIII announced to the duke, he had decided to send a person who enjoyed his esteem ('certum hominem nobis probatum') to him. The pope's emissary or agent would have to review all issues with the duke so that the whole matter could be discussed in more detail and, with the help of God, resolved.<sup>654</sup> The pope's choice of word – a 'certain man' rather than 'a legate', 'an extraordinary nuncio' or 'an envoy' – underlines that Clement considered to make the two Vasa relatives reach an agreement by means of a mission which did not have any official character. Firstly, the pope probably would not have established formal diplomatic contact with an individual whom he regarded as a 'rebelling' subject of the Swedish king. Secondly, even if the duke had been a sovereign prince, the Holy See would not have recognised his right to rule since, by his adherence to heresy, he had incurred the major excommunication *latae sententiae*. And yet the pope expected the duke to treat his agent like a representative of the Holy See in as much as immunity was concerned.

Clement VIII addressed the main purpose of his missive only at the end of the brief: as San Giorgio had announced to the nuncio in Poland, the pope requested the duke to order the issue of a public, full and solemn safe-conduct for the person whom he intended to task with a mission to Charles Vasa. Probably in order to avoid ambiguities and misunderstandings which could cause further delays, the pope told Duke Charles which guarantees the safe-conduct would have to contain. Clement explained that, as it was custom, the duke would have to promise and pledge by oath that whomsoever the pontiff decided to send would receive safe access to the duke, could stay unharmed at the duke's court and would be allowed to return freely to the pope.<sup>655</sup> Clement VIII's reference to custom and the duke's word addresses an important point about the continuing practices in international relations in a *respublica christiana* which was in the process of decay.

Randall Lesaffer observed that mediaeval and early modern peace treaties were usually confirmed by the swearing of an oath; breaking the oath was a sin and punishable by excommunication in canon law. With the outbreak of the Reformation, canon law lost its meaning as a means for safeguarding peace treaties since the Protestants refused to

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<sup>654</sup> Ibid., f. 154r–v.

<sup>655</sup> Ibid., f. 154v.

recognise the authority of the papacy and with it the validity of canon law. Although canon law was no longer applicable, princes continued to take religious oath on the keeping of peace treaties.<sup>656</sup> They also continued to pledge by 'their "princely" or "royal" word' that they would uphold the treaty.<sup>657</sup> Lesaffer's observation is useful for highlighting that in his brief Clement VIII showed himself ready to trust that a Protestant would keep a promise by oath even though this 'heretic' did not regard himself subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction. It seems therefore that the code of honour, which had derived from the feudal and chivalric tradition of the Middle Ages, served as a foothold on which the Aldobrandini pope could rely in his dealings with a 'heretic': Clement expected Duke Charles to keep his word as a prince and to respect customary practices, such as diplomatic immunity, in 'international law' despite his adherence to heresy.<sup>658</sup>

Another tradition, the pope's duties in his role as the spiritual head of the *respublica christiana*, provided the Protestant duke and the pope with a rhetorical framework which allowed them to start discussing peace negotiations across confessional boundaries in the first place. As we have seen, Charles had appealed to Clement VIII's particular concern for peace in Christendom and for the war against the Ottomans. The pope, in return, emphasised in his reply that he would attempt to fulfil his duty and restore concord between the two Vasas because of his special paternal love for Sigismund. Palpably absent from Clement VIII's brief, however, is any reference to the pontiff's impartiality which, over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was becoming an integral part of the papal *padre comune* rhetoric.<sup>659</sup> The absence of the pope's neutrality in the brief manifested itself rather in what the pontiff did *not* write than in what he wrote.

In standard papal rhetoric, a pope's impartiality is expressed by his equal love or affection for *all* his children, the (Catholic) princes of Christendom. Evidently, as a Protestant, Duke Charles was not one of the pope's sons and, as we have seen, was not addressed as such in the papal brief. Clement VIII only referred to the Catholic Sigismund III as his beloved son ('car(issi)mu(m) in chr(ist)o filium nostrum').<sup>660</sup> The pontiff also explained to Duke Charles that he was moved to act by his paternal love for King Sigismund.<sup>661</sup> Thus, Clement VIII did not pretend to consider the interests of the duke of Södermanland anywhere in the brief, unlike Duke Charles who had insisted on the advantages which would arise to the pope from a reconciliation between King Sigismund

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<sup>656</sup> Lesaffer, 'Peace', p. 24.

<sup>657</sup> Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>658</sup> On the issue of trust in Protestants, see: Osborne, 'Friendship', passim.

<sup>659</sup> Burkhardt, *Abschied*, p. 370.

<sup>660</sup> ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 44, ff. 153v–154r: Clement VIII to Duke Charles, 10 June 1600.

<sup>661</sup> Ibid., f. 154r.

and the duke. Nor did the pope respond to Charles Vasa's account of the events in Sweden.

The summary of Duke Charles's long letter to the pontiff constitutes circa half the text of Clement's brief. Yet, the pope neither readdressed Charles's version of the military and political events in Sweden in 1598 nor his profession of innocence in them. For the pope, Sigismund III was the rightful Swedish king. As such, the monarch had all rights to return to Sweden in 1598 and to reassert his authority in his native kingdom. From this it follows that, had Clement VIII replied to the duke's accusations of King Sigismund's misguided decisions, he would have had to refute them. Hence, the pope probably deemed it best to pass the ducal complaints over in silence. Conversely, Clement VIII included Duke Charles's reference to 'restless men'.

The pope did not directly blame these 'restless men' for everything that had happened between King Sigismund and Duke Charles: the pope simply repeated that Charles Vasa had mentioned them as the origin of the discord between the two Vasa princes. The pope's short reference to the 'restless men', however, allowed for the interpretation that neither the duke nor King Sigismund bore the ultimate blame for the military escalation in 1598. In such an interpretation, Sigismund could only be blamed for not having detected the evil intentions of these 'restless men' and for listening to their bad advice. Clement VIII also chose to omit from the brief that Charles had invaded Finland and Estonia after he had profusely expressed his wish for peace in his epistle for the pope. In this manner, the supreme pontiff could at least cultivate the appearance of impartiality and thus lay grounds for a papal peace mission. Still, the objective of the pope's projected peace mission was not to reconcile two rulers. Even after Sigismund's disposition as king of Sweden in July 1599, Clement VIII still considered Sigismund the rightful sovereign of Sweden in June 1600 to whom Charles owed due obedience as his subject. Thus Clement VIII envisaged to reconcile a Protestant subject with his Catholic lord rather than to make peace between a Catholic and a Protestant sovereign. Clearly, the pope hoped that such a reconciliation would help Sigismund to regain his authority in his native kingdom and that this then would also benefit the Catholic cause in Sweden.

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So far, Part III of this thesis has highlighted that the traditional duties of the pontiff in his role as the spiritual leader of Christendom provided the Protestant duke of Södermanland with a rhetorical tool which allowed him to contact Clement VIII on his strife with Sigismund III Vasa, the Catholic king of Poland and Sweden. Clement VIII's past

achievements as a peacemaker and his concern for the war against the Ottomans had promoted his image as a pope who endeavoured to fulfil his role as the *padre comune* and spiritual head of the *respublica christiana*. Thus the dedication of the Aldobrandini pope to peace in Christendom and to the anti-Ottoman war in his political and diplomatic efforts offered a concrete fundament upon which the Protestant duke could base his attempt to invoke the pope's concern for peace in the realms of King Sigismund. Contrary to Garstein's assertion, the pontiff replied to Duke Charles's letter and proposed to send an agent to the duke in order to reconcile him with his king instead of exhorting King Sigismund to peace. Quite obviously, the pontiff deemed that it was the duke rather than the king who was the root of the problem and needed to re-subject himself to his sovereign. Clement VIII therefore decided that he should take advantage of the duke's appeal to the pope's duty to pacify Christendom and that he should respond to the letter. This demonstrates that the rhetoric of the pope's care for peace as the *padre comune* and spiritual head of the *respublica christiana* could be put into practice in specific diplomatic endeavours to resolve international and even transconfessional conflicts.

Traditionally, however, the duty of the spiritual head of Christendom was not merely to pacify the Latin West in order to protect it against enemies from without but also against enemies of the Church from within Christian Europe. From the point of view of the Holy See, Charles Vasa himself was such an enemy of the Church who posed an internal threat to Christendom. Duke Charles therefore was careful not to mention his religious differences with King Sigismund in his letter to the supreme pontiff. Clement VIII, in turn, also decided not to address the confessional dimension of the conflict in his brief for Charles. This demonstrates that, while the Holy See outwardly insisted on matters of principle and rejected to make peace across confessional boundaries, in his day-to-day response to religio-political issues, Clement VIII was willing to make exceptions and showed political pragmatism. If the pontiff deemed that political necessity demanded it, Clement VIII regarded it as permissible to show himself less intransigent than his duty to protect Christendom against the enemies of the Church seemingly would require. The next chapter explains how the conflict between the two Vasa relatives presented itself to Clement VIII when he received another letter from Duke Charles and situates the pontiff's overall response to the power struggle between King Sigismund and Charles Vasa within his wider policies for Poland and Sweden.

## **The Vasas' strife and Clement VIII's wider strategy (1598–1601)**

The previous chapter shed new light on a correspondence between Charles Vasa, duke of Södermanland, Närke and Värmland, and Pope Clement VIII. In March 1599, the Protestant duke invoked the pope's care for peace in Christendom and for the formation of a league against the Sublime Porte as a basis for contacting the supreme pontiff. In this letter, Charles Vasa expressed his hope that Clement would exhort King Sigismund of Poland and Sweden to desist from further military enterprises against his uncle and his other Swedish subjects. In Rome, the duke's letter was used as a point of departure for discussing a papal mission to Poland and Sweden with the objective to reconcile the two Vasa princes. The pontiff knew that Sigismund had been deposed as king of Sweden in the meantime and that the Vasa monarch doubted the honesty of his uncle's intentions. Nevertheless, with the eventual approval of Sigismund, Clement VIII took the decision to send an emissary to Charles and asked him for a safe-conduct in a brief on 10 June 1600.

The introduction to this part explained that the *Archivio Doria Pamphilj* preserve a copy of Duke Charles's reply to Clement VIII's brief which had sparked the present research on the papal attempts to settle the Vasas' conflict. The document is filed in a folder which contains letters of the viceroy of Naples to the pontiff.<sup>662</sup> Consequently, there are no letters in this folder – or in the whole bundle, as a matter of fact – which provide any context or indication for the true identity of the epistle's author. It is therefore understandable that Renato Vignodelli Rubrichi simply listed it as a 'Lettera di Carlo duca [di?]' in his catalogue to the *Fondo Aldobrandini*.<sup>663</sup> The wider historical significance of this inconspicuous letter, therefore, only becomes apparent to a person familiar with the strife between King Sigismund and his uncle or a researcher who also read the correspondence of the Polish nuncio in more detail.

Ludwig von Pastor, who would have been aware of the power struggle between the

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<sup>662</sup> ADP, FA, 21, f. 105r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S.]. On the folder has been noted 'dal 1592 al 1603. Lettere del vicerè di Napoli a Papa Clemente VIII. Una Lettera del Duca Carlo del 1600'.

<sup>663</sup> Vignodelli Rubrichi, 'Il Fondo Aldobrandini', p. 24.

Vasa princes, had taken notes of some of the material held in the *Archivio Doria Pamphilj* in 1908 but, to his chagrin, he discovered that the archive 'had become inaccessible' when he wished to carry out further research after the First World War.<sup>664</sup> Pastor thus no longer had the occasion to analyse the contents of the *Fondo Aldobrandini* more extensively. Since Pastor also seems to have overlooked the importance of Clement VIII's brief for Duke Charles, the account on the Vasas' power struggle in the *History of the Popes* stops with Sigismund's deposition as king of Sweden in 1599, as we have seen in the introduction to this part. Moreover, the previous chapter explained that Oskar Garstein misread his primary and secondary sources and, as a consequence, Clement VIII's attempts to reconcile Duke Charles and King Sigismund are misrepresented in *Rome and the Counter-Reformation in Scandinavia*. This signifies that, more generally, an important aspect of the pope's interpretation of his role as supreme peacemaker has not received the necessary scholarly attention.

This chapter situates Clement VIII's response to the duke's second letter for the pope within the context of Charles's and Sigismund's war over Livonia. The first subchapter reveals the degree to which the papacy was informed on political developments in Sweden and on the military situation in Livonia. This chapter analyses the second letter of Duke Charles for Clement VIII. It highlights how the evolving events in Sweden and Livonia were reflected in this missive and how the pope responded to it. Subsequently, this chapter places Clement's attempts to reconcile the two Vasa relatives within his wider religio-political goals for Poland and Sweden.

From the perspective of the Aldobrandini pontiff, the strife between the Vasa relatives entailed a potential for conflict which could destabilise a vast part of Latin Christendom. This chapter shows that, in order to save and retain the Catholic religion in Christendom, Clement VIII was willing to intervene between King Sigismund, a Catholic prince, and Duke Charles, his Protestant subject, even after the latter unequivocally refused to acknowledge the king of Sweden any longer as his sovereign. The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate that Clement VIII considered particular issues as forming part of political and religious problems on a much larger, national and international scale. Consequently, it is essential that historical scholarship overcomes national perspectives and situates papal diplomacy within the supranational context within which it operated.

### **8.1. Duke Charles's second letter for Clement VIII (1600)**

Already on 24 June 1600, a mere fortnight after Clement VIII had issued his brief for Duke

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<sup>664</sup> Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIII, p. 527.



Charles, Cardinal San Giorgio replied to the nuncio in Poland that in Rome they were disgusted at the bad news from Sweden.<sup>665</sup> At the beginning and towards the end of July 1600, San Giorgio replied to further negative news from Sweden.<sup>666</sup> Was this a response to reports which Rangoni might have forwarded about a gathering of the Swedish Estates at Linköping? During a meeting of the Swedish Estates in March 1600, a court trialled personal enemies of Duke Charles in the Swedish Council of State (*råd*). Some of the accused councillors constituted 'the heart of the royalist party in Sweden' whom Sigismund III had to surrender to his uncle after his military defeat in 1598. On 20 March 1600, five of these councillors were executed. Two decisions of the Swedish Estates in March 1600 caused further concern in Poland and Rome. Firstly, as mentioned previously, the *riksdag* excluded Sigismund's successors permanently from the Swedish throne after the king had ignored their offering of the Swedish crown to Prince Ladislas (Chapter 7.2.). Secondly, the Swedish Estates made adherence to the Swedish Lutheran Church a condition for ascending the throne in Sweden.<sup>667</sup> Presumably in reaction to these events in Sweden, Cardinal San Giorgio wrote that in Rome they shared in the pain which Sigismund III had received from the recent events in his native kingdom. In a mixture of consolation and exhortation, the cardinal added that they hoped that the king soon 'will have better fortune and the strength required to resist the calamities which sadden him'.<sup>668</sup> As a matter of fact, however, the situation deteriorated even further for King Sigismund.

As we have seen in the previous chapter, in late October 1599 troops of Duke Charles captured Narva in Estonia, a province of the historic region of Livonia which had been under Swedish rule since the 1580s. By the end of March 1600, the entire province was under the control of the duke. Once he had established his sway over Estonia, Duke Charles resolved to conquer the rest of Livonia too.<sup>669</sup> In August 1600, the duke invaded Polish Livonia and started to distribute offices and lands among his followers in return for their support in his power struggle with Sigismund in Sweden.<sup>670</sup> By autumn 1600, therefore, the Holy See kept receiving negative news from the nuncio in Poland and by mid-October, Cardinal San Giorgio commented that the reports on Duke Charles's military progress were troublesome.<sup>671</sup> Yet, in spite of this adverse intelligence, the pope did not give up hope on a

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<sup>665</sup> ASV, *FB, serie IV*, 215b, f. 194r: San Giorgio to Rangoni, 24 June 1600.

<sup>666</sup> ASV, *FB, serie IV*, 215b, f. 197v: San Giorgio to Rangoni, 1 July 1600; f. 203v: San Giorgio to Rangoni, 25 July 1600.

<sup>667</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, pp. 382, 387–391.

<sup>668</sup> ASV, *FB, serie IV*, 215b, f. 203v: San Giorgio to Rangoni, 25 July 1600.

<sup>669</sup> Glete, *Administration*, p. 93; Davies, *Playground*, p. 338.

<sup>670</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, p. 400. For a discussion of Duke Charles's motives to attack Polish Livonia, see: *ibid.*, p. 399; Davies, *Playground*, p. 338.

<sup>671</sup> ASV, *FB, serie IV*, 215b, f. 227r: San Giorgio to Rangoni, 14 Oct 1600.

possible reply from Charles for Clement VIII.

In October 1600, San Giorgio told the nuncio in Poland that he and the pope still awaited some sort of reply from Duke Charles, even if he had changed his mind and no longer sought the 'peace for which he had shown so much desire' now that he had been blessed with good fortune in his military conquests.<sup>672</sup> This statement provides useful insight into Rome's evaluation of the Vasas' strife. It suggests that Clement VIII believed that Duke Charles's initial desire for peace had been genuine. The pope's brief for the duke was therefore more than a reply *pro forma*; it constituted an authentic, tentative offer of papal intervention between the duke and his nephew. In San Giorgio's remark that the duke had shown so much desire for peace resonates regret and disappointment. The Holy See was clearly aware that the chances of an agreement would have been higher had Duke Charles been less successful in the consolidation of his position in Sweden and in his military campaign in Livonia. It is therefore remarkable that, although the curia realised that the outlook for a solution to the conflict had worsened, it still awaited a reply of Charles. The duke sent an answer indeed but, in October 1600, Clement had to wait for another six months until the ducal letter arrived in Rome in about mid-March 1601.

In the meantime, Duke Charles continued to make military progress in Livonia. Therefore rumour had it, according to Rangoni, that the grand chancellor and grand hetman (chief military commander) of Poland, Jan Zamoyski (1542/1545–1605), had offered to end the duke's military advancements in person. In the past, Zamoyski had often acted as an opponent of Sigismund III, his own king, and in particular between 1587 and 1598, the grand chancellor probably had hoped to gain the Polish crown for himself one day.<sup>673</sup> Zamoyski's offer to lead the king's troops personally into battle did not root entirely in his sense of duty as chief military commander. In the winter of 1600–1601, the grand chancellor apparently had a personal interest in helping Sigismund and stopping the duke's progress: Rangoni had learned that Zamoyski had sent a considerable number of soldiers to protect Derpsk from where he drew great revenue as its royal administrator (*Starost*).<sup>674</sup> Soldiers were certainly needed in Derpsk by the end of January 1601 when Duke Charles was said to be in the vicinity of the town with an army of twelve thousand soldiers and forty pieces of artillery.<sup>675</sup> Rangoni, however, also forwarded good, albeit unconfirmed, news.

Rangoni related that in the surroundings of Kies (modern-day Cēsis in Latvia), the

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<sup>672</sup> Ibid., ff. 225v–226r: San Giorgio to Rangoni, 7 Oct 1600.

<sup>673</sup> For Zamoyski's ambitions, see: Leitsch, *Leben*, vol. III, pp. 676–677, 692–709; Leitsch, *Sigismund III.*, passim.

<sup>674</sup> ADP, *FA*, 4, f. 58v: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 5 Jan 1601.

<sup>675</sup> Ibid., f. 69r: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 29 Jan 1601.

army of Duke Charles had suffered 3000 casualties at the hands of 500 Poles only. Allegedly, there were only ten casualties on the Polish side.<sup>676</sup> In early February 1601, Rangoni forwarded *avvisi* which either had formed the basis of these rumours or which confirmed them. However, these *avvisi* also reported that the duke still made progress in Livonia, conquering castles everywhere.<sup>677</sup> Clearly, Claudio Rangoni provided Rome with regular news on the on-going war in Livonia; the reports may not always have been accurate but the pope was evidently kept up-to-date on the events in Poland and Sweden. Eventually, on 12 February 1601, Rangoni announced that four letters had arrived in Warsaw. These were letters from Duke Charles for King Sigismund, the Polish senators, Rangoni and Clement VIII.<sup>678</sup>

At the latest by the end of 1600, the enmity between Charles and Sigismund had reached a degree which no longer allowed for formal and polite contacts between the two relatives. Together with the military hostilities, this complicated and delayed the communication between the two opponents: Duke Charles dispatched his second letter for Clement VIII from Wittenstein (Paide) on 21 December 1600 (New Style)<sup>679</sup> but the nuncio in Warsaw only announced its reception to San Giorgio on 12 February 1601.<sup>680</sup> Thus, the delivery of this letter from Wittenstein to Warsaw (ca. 900 km) lasted nearly two months. In comparison, the delivery time of Rangoni's letters from Warsaw to Rome (ca. 1,800 km) normally was just above one month, that is, nearly half the time for twice the distance. The breakdown of communication between the two opponents meant that one Charles's Livonian captives had been charged to deliver the letters in Warsaw. This captive, according to Rangoni, had been promised liberty if he delivered the letters and returned to the duke; if he failed to do so, his wife and other relatives would be put to death.<sup>681</sup>

When Rangoni received the letter which Duke Charles had addressed to him, he showed it to King Sigismund and forwarded a copy to Rome, together with the letter for Clement VIII. Sigismund III, in turn, informed the nuncio on the content of the letters for the senators. Apparently, Duke Charles tried to justify his military actions to the senate,<sup>682</sup> that is the 'King's Council', which was dominated by the magnates of Poland–Lithuania and formed the smaller of the two chambers of the *Sejm* (diet).<sup>683</sup> Charles Vasa explained to the

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<sup>676</sup> Ibid.

<sup>677</sup> Ibid., f. 72r: 'Avvisi' (sent with letter of Rangoni to San Giorgio, 5 Feb 1601).

<sup>678</sup> Ibid., f. 78r: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 12 Feb 1601.

<sup>679</sup> ADP, *FA*, 21, f. 105r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S.].

<sup>680</sup> ADP, *FA*, 4, f. 78r: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 12 Feb 1601.

<sup>681</sup> Ibid.

<sup>682</sup> Ibid.

<sup>683</sup> Mączak, Antoni, 'The conclusive years: the end of the Sixteenth Century as the turning-point of Polish history', in Kouri and Scott (eds.), *Politics and Society*, p. 517; Davies, *Playground*, p. 253.

senate that he had moved arms against Poland because he had not received any reply to some letters which he had written and because his envoys had been imprisoned. As further causes for the invasion, he also named the damages which the Poles had inflicted on the kingdom of Sweden, the 'papist religion' and the danger that Sigismund and the Poles would use any occasion given to them to harm Sweden even more. These accusations moved Sigismund III, who had seen Charles's letter for the nuncio but not the one for the pope, to comment that Duke Charles surely 'blamed others in his letter for [Clement VIII] in order to excuse his bad proceedings'.<sup>684</sup> Here again, Clement VIII was made aware that Duke Charles saw in King Sigismund a threat to the Swedish Lutheran Church: Clement was certainly not deceived about Charles's outspoken aversion to the Catholic religion just because the duke sent a letter to the pope and his representative in Poland.

In his short letter for Rangoni, the duke related that he had received Clement VIII's brief with some delay and that he had deemed it necessary to attend instantly to answering it. Therefore, the duke would be grateful if the nuncio ensured that his letter reached the pope as soon as possible.<sup>685</sup> When Rangoni forwarded the duke's letters to Rome in February 1601, he could not refrain from commenting that 'although the superscript on the letter for His Holiness is out of proportion, given from where it comes, I still accepted it laughingly'.<sup>686</sup> Rangoni did not repeat the superscription, the address on the outside of the letter, but the copy of Duke Charles's letter in the *Archivio Doria Pamphilj* at least includes the duke's salutation. Charles Vasa greeted the pope as 'Reverendissime et Potentissime Domine Romanae Catholicae Ecclesiae Pontifex'.<sup>687</sup> As a matter of fact, however, this salutation was less exaggerated compared to the greeting in the duke's first letter for the pope ('Sanctissime Romanae Catholicae Ecclesiae Summe Pontifex et Pater, Domine Reverendissime'): in his second letter Duke Charles omitted 'most holy', 'highest' and 'father' from the salutation. The Duke also no longer called Clement VIII 'Your Pontifical Holiness' ('Vestra Pontificia Sanctitas') but simply addressed him as 'Your Reverence' ('Reverentia Tua') throughout the letter.<sup>688</sup>

It is difficult to explain this alteration in the form of address and in the salutation. Charles had asked the pope to exhort King Sigismund to peace in his first letter and the pope in turn offered to reconcile the duke with his king. Was the duke not interested in such a papal mission and felt therefore that he did not need to show due respect to the pope anymore? Did Charles Vasa deem that by December 1600 he was in a military position

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<sup>684</sup> ADP, FA, 4, f. 78r: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 12 Feb 1601.

<sup>685</sup> Ibid., f. 88r: Duke Charles to Rangoni, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S.].

<sup>686</sup> Ibid., f. 78r: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 12 Feb 1601.

<sup>687</sup> ADP, FA, 21, f. 105r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S.].

<sup>688</sup> Ibid.

which allowed him not to be too concerned about having to make peace with Sigismund? This seems unlikely because, towards the end of 1600, Polish-Lithuanian troops had started to take 'advantage of the dispersal of the Swedish forces, which were engaged in various siege operations' and Christoph Mikołaj 'the Thunderbolt' Radziwiłł (1547–1603), the grand hetman of Lithuania, had been able to gather 6000 armed men for fighting the duke's troops.<sup>689</sup> It seems therefore more likely that the duke did not wish to reject the option of a later agreement with the king prematurely.

Possibly, the alterations in the epistolary ceremonial simply originate in the fact that the epistle had truly been written in haste, as Duke Charles himself pointed out in the letter. The missive was certainly shorter and less detailed than the first letter for the pope. It even referred to Claudio Rangoni as 'Carolus Rongonus' which suggests that the epistle had been penned in a haste and without attention to details:<sup>690</sup> presumably, the pope's brief had been accompanied by a letter from the nuncio from where the scribe could have retrieved Rangoni's correct name. It is not possible to provide a definitive answer but, given that the duke started to face increasing opposition from Polish troops, it is likely that Charles Vasa did not wish to affront Clement VIII intentionally by showing less respect for the supreme pontiff. Otherwise he could have simply refrained from replying to the pope's brief.

Duke Charles started his letter to the pontiff by explaining that he had received Clement VIII's reply to his letter of the previous year. Just as he had hoped, the duke pointed out, he learnt from the brief that the pope longed for nothing more than for the restoration of peace and tranquillity throughout Christendom. The duke of Södermanland also gathered that Clement VIII especially wished that there would again be concord 'between the king of Poland and us'. If Clement VIII directed his attention to the restoration of peace in Christendom and exhorted Sigismund to peace, the pope would greatly help his 'son', the king of Poland, and would render the duke a most agreeable service too. Thus, Duke Charles stressed, the pontiff would earn immortal glory for his own name and would fulfil the duties of his office ('quod sui est officijs').

In as much as Charles was concerned, he assured the pope, he would never reject any interposition for the re-establishment of tranquillity and concord. Had the pontiff's 'son', Sigismund, been as willing to accept such an interposition as Duke Charles, he continued, the whole matter would not have been reduced to the current state of affairs. The duke would not reject conditions of peace indeed if there was any way to obtain justice and if the

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<sup>689</sup> Marian Kujawski, 'The Battle of Kirchholm: a masterpiece of early XVIIth Century military tactics', *The Polish Review*, 11 (1966), p. 46.

<sup>690</sup> ADP, *FA*, 21, f. 105r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S]. This reference to Claudio Rangoni as 'Carolus Rongonus' also explains why, in 1863, Theodor Norlin believed that the name of the nuncio in Poland was 'Karl Rongo'. See: Norlin, *Sigismund*, p. 151.

pope's 'son' preferred to settle this affair by the means of impartial arbiters rather than by arms. Duke Charles also promised that if Clement VIII deemed the presence of an envoy useful to contribute to the reestablishment of concord, then he could send one safely to the duke. After all, the duke of Södermanland pointed out, he was neither a stranger to humanity nor to the conventional practices of states: he knew what treatment was owed to envoys by the *ius gentium* and, the duke pledged, he would willingly grant them such treatment.<sup>691</sup>

Duke Charles's letter of December 1600 differed in several aspects from his first letter to the pontiff. To start with, as mentioned, the second epistle was much shorter and less detailed. The duke still hinted at King Sigismund's disinclination to peace but refrained from extensive justifications and protestations of his innocence, maybe because the pope had not addressed them at all in his brief. The duke also no longer blamed 'restless men' in the entourage of King Sigismund for their bad advice. Duke Charles probably did not deem this necessary anymore since in the letter of December 1600, he no longer simply requested the pope to use his authority among Sigismund III for turning the king's mind to peace: now the duke accepted Clement VIII's offer of a peace mission.

It needs to be stressed that Duke Charles did not necessarily pledge to accept the pope's emissary as an impartial arbiter; he simply showed himself ready to welcome a person sent by the pope if Clement deemed that his deputy could *contribute* ('conferre') something to the settlement of the whole affair by impartial arbiters.<sup>692</sup> In the first letter, the duke appealed to Clement VIII's concern and work for peace and concord several times.<sup>693</sup> Remarkably, in his second letter, the duke invoked Clement VIII's care for peace as the pontiff's 'office' or 'duty' ('quod sui est officijs fecerit').<sup>694</sup> Thus there is a subtle shift: rather than appealing to Clement VIII's personal concern for peace, Duke Charles now directly reminded him that, as pope, it was his duty to care for peace. This shift may not have been intentional but it is important nevertheless if we take into account that the duke also no longer mentioned the war against the Ottomans in his second letter.

We have seen that the duke of Södermanland appealed to Clement VIII's extraordinary zeal to fulfil his role as the spiritual head of Christendom in his first letter of mid-March 1599. In December 1600, the pontiff was as eager as ever to unite the Christian princes in a war against the Ottoman Empire. Clement VIII was, however, also aware that this goal had been undermined by the outbreak of war between France and Savoy in August

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<sup>691</sup> ADP, FA, 21, f. 105r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S].

<sup>692</sup> Ibid.

<sup>693</sup> NLS, MS Engeströmska samlingen, B I.1.23, ff. 307v, 308r, 310v, 311r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 16 March 1599 [O.S.].

<sup>694</sup> ADP, FA, 21, f. 105r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S].

1600 since the Franco-Sabaudian conflict over Saluzzo also endangered the Franco-Spanish peace (see also Chapter 3.2.). Presumably, by December 1600, Duke Charles had learned of this renewal of war between Henry IV and Charles Emmanuel I, and maybe even that Clement VIII attempted to settle the conflict by a peace legation. The duke of Södermanland also must have known that it was impossible for Clement to make Sigismund support Rudolf II's anti-Ottoman war for as long as the Polish king and the emperor continued to rival over their influence in Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldavia.<sup>695</sup> Last but not least: how could Duke Charles convince the pope that he really wished peace in Christendom so that Sigismund III could join the anti-Ottoman war if he himself had invaded Estonia and for as long as the duke continued his military conquests in Polish Livonia?

Possibly the duke of Södermanland tried to remind Clement VIII that, even at times when the achievement of a league against the Sublime Porte seemed to have receded into the distance, it was still the duty of the spiritual leader of the *respublica christiana* to make and preserve peace in Christendom. Significantly, this means that the Protestant duke recognised that, in theory, the popes prepossessed a position as supreme peacemakers among the Catholic princes. Nor did Duke Charles hesitate to have recourse to this papal authority if it promised to work in his favour. The superior position of the pope as the father of the Catholic princes is also reflected in the style in which the duke of Södermanland referred to King Sigismund.

In his lengthy first letter of 1599, the duke simply called King Sigismund 'His Royal Majesty'<sup>696</sup> but, once, also invoked Clement VIII's 'paternal affection' for the king of Poland and Sweden.<sup>697</sup> In his brief of June 1600, Clement referred to King Sigismund twice as 'his son' and once to his 'paternal love' for the king.<sup>698</sup> Remarkably, Duke Charles then copied the pope's reference to Sigismund as his son: thrice in his short, second letter, Duke Charles also referred to King Sigismund as the pontiff's 'son'.<sup>699</sup> Although the Protestant duke himself did not greet the supreme pontiff as 'pater' anymore in his second letter, he still adopted Clement VIII's 'father and son'-rhetoric and thus implicitly reminded the pope of his 'paternal' duty to care for the wellbeing of the Catholic King Sigismund. Whether, in

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<sup>695</sup> For this rivalry, see: Niederkorn, *Mächte*, pp. 482–498; Litwin, 'La Repubblica di Polonia', pp. 131–13; Meinolf Arens, *Habsburg und Siebenbürgen (1600–1605): gewaltsame Eingliederungsversuche eines ostmitteleuropäischen Fürstentums in einen frühabsolutistischen Reichsverband* (Cologne, 2001); Buta, 'I ragguagli', passim; Buta, 'I paesi romeni', passim. The curia addressed the issue at length in several instructions, see JAITNER, vol. II, pp. 398–416, 425–426, 435–440, 609, 611–616, 723–724.

<sup>696</sup> NLS, *MS Engeströmska samlingen*, B I.1.23, ff. 308r, 308v, 309r, 309v, 310r, 311r, 311v, 312r, 312v: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 16 March 1599 [O.S.].

<sup>697</sup> Ibid., f. 308v.

<sup>698</sup> ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 44, f. 154r (no. 163): Clement VIII to Duke Charles, 10 June 1600.

<sup>699</sup> ADP, *FA*, 21, f. 105r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S.].

December 1600, Duke Charles actually had any intention to reconcile himself with his Catholic nephew is a different question.

***The possible intentions of Duke Charles and the response in Warsaw and Rome***

The objective of Charles Vasa's letter for the pope could simply have been to ward off criticism in Sweden: the duke could have countered his critics that, if necessary, he would even be ready to accept an intervention of the pope in order to come to terms with Sigismund. Duke Charles's war in Livonia 'was from the beginning most unpopular in Sweden'. The duke of Södermanland probably invaded Livonia in order to extend his sphere of influence to the shores south of the Baltic Sea. However, according to Roberts, it is also possible that the duke 'hoped that an invasion of Livonia would constrain Sigismund to agree to some sort of compromise: at the end of the year he certainly proposed that their dispute be submitted to arbitration, though it may be doubted whether he would have relished being taken at his word'.<sup>700</sup> Unfortunately, Roberts neither elaborated further on this point nor did he give any reference. In any case, Roberts was correct that at the end of 1600, Charles showed himself ready to find an agreement with King Sigismund – in a letter to Clement VIII. It is difficult to establish how willing the duke was to discuss a reconciliation with Sigismund.

One reason for the duke to assert that he did not object to settling his conflict with Sigismund might have been that he wished to keep his options open in December 1600. As mentioned, by late 1600, the duke's troops had started to meet more resolute opposition from Polish-Lithuanian forces and the Lithuanian grand hetman Christoph Mikołaj Radziwiłł intended to resist Charles's troops with 6000 soldiers. A letter which Duke Charles penned on the same day as he wrote his second missive for Clement VIII demonstrates that the incipient military response gave the duke cause for concern.

The document in question is Duke Charles's letter for the hitherto unknown 'Ladevilus Junior' to which Oskar Garstein referred when he argued that Pope Clement VIII had declined Charles Vasa's request to act as a reconciler between King Sigismund and the duke (see Chapter 7.2.). In the letter, Charles wrote that he had learnt that the recipient of his epistle had recently come to Kokenhausen (Koknese in modern-day Latvia) and that he intended to fight the duke. Charles Vasa showed himself astonished that the addressee had been persuaded by the 'Popish crowd', who only wanted to ruin him, to wage war against the duke, who only wanted peace. The duke then tried to convince the recipient of the letter that he should join Charles's side. The addressee of the letter and his father, the

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<sup>700</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, p. 399.



duke emphasised, could be raised to higher and larger dignities than they already enjoyed; since they already controlled a significant share of 'Littowum', that is, Lithuania ('Litauen' in modern Swedish), they could become the rulers of all of 'Littowum', which currently had no principal regent and was oppressed by the yoke of Poland.<sup>701</sup> Clearly, Duke Charles tried to appeal to the religious and patriotic sentiments as well as political ambitions of a Protestant member of an important Lithuanian family.

The content of this letter suggests that the duke of Södermanland did not send it to a person called 'Ladevilus Junior', as Oskar Garstein mistakenly thought. Almost certainly he sent it to 'Radevilus Junior': Christoph 'the Younger' Radziwiłł or, in Lithuanian, Radvila (1585–1640). Christoph Radziwiłł, the later grand hetman, was the second son of the deputy chancellor and grand hetman of Lithuania at the time, the abovementioned Christoph Mikołaj 'the Thunderbolt' Radziwiłł. Father and son were Calvinists who had remained loyal to the Catholic king of Poland. 'The Thunderbolt' defeated the troops of Duke Charles at Kokenhausen in early 1601 and, already as an adolescent, his son participated in the war against the Protestant duke of Södermanland in Livonia.<sup>702</sup>

Thus, at the same time as Charles Vasa showed himself ready to receive a papal agent for possible peace talks with his nephew, the duke also tried to convince some of his enemies to join his war against their sovereign. This does not signify that the duke did not have any intention to make peace with Sigismund III but it seems that the peace which the duke had in mind would hardly have been acceptable for Sigismund. Still writing from a position of military superiority, the duke of Södermanland offered to change the political constitution of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth in his letter to Christoph 'the Younger' Radziwiłł. The duke tempted the two Christoph Radziwiłłs with the rule over the entire grand-duchy of Lithuania.

By depriving Sigismund of the grand-duchy, Duke Charles would have reversed the Union of Lublin which had united the kingdom of Poland and the grand-duchy of Lithuania in one commonwealth in 1569, not without the resistance of leading Lithuanian magnates.<sup>703</sup> Although the king could not know it yet, he had already lost his native kingdom of Sweden for good; Duke Charles also controlled Estonia and now he was trying to stir Lithuanian magnates up against the king too. Thus, the duke attempted to reduce

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<sup>701</sup> SNA, *Riksregistraturet*, 91, ff. 360v–361r: Duke Charles to Christoph 'the Younger' Radziwiłł, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S.]. I thank Dr Birgitte Dedenroth-Schou who kindly translated key passages of this letter.

<sup>702</sup> Tadeusz Nowakowski, *The Radziwiłłs: The Social History of a Great European Family*, transl. E. B. Garside (New York, 1974), pp. 85–88.

<sup>703</sup> Almut Bues, 'The formation of the Polish-Lithuanian monarchy in the sixteenth century', in Richard Butterwick (ed.), *The Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy in European Context (c. 1500–1795)* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp. 63–67.

King Sigismund's rule to the kingdom of Poland alone. To Duke Charles's credit it must be stressed that the duke did not seem to aim at raising false hopes in his letters for King Sigismund, Nuncio Rangoni and Pope Clement VIII in December 1600.

In his first letter for Clement VIII, Charles Vasa referred to King Sigismund as 'Regia M(aies)tas Suetiae et Poloniae etc.' and declared his wish to subject himself to his rightful king.<sup>704</sup> In December 1600, however, the duke simply spoke of Sigismund III as the 'king of Poland'.<sup>705</sup> In his letter to the nuncio, Duke Charles referred to himself as 'Carolus Dei gra(tia) Regnor(um) Suetiae Gothiae et Vandaliae Gubernans hereditarius Princeps Dux Sudermaniae Nericiae et Wermalandiae'.<sup>706</sup> From the perspective of the supporters of Duke Charles, his stylisation as 'governing crown prince' was certainly correct. As we have seen, the Swedish Estates had dethroned King Sigismund in 1599 and offered the crown to the king's son, Ladislas. By 1600, Sigismund had neither replied to the letter nor sent the prince to Sweden and, consequently, in March, the *riksdag* excluded Sigismund's descendants as well as his half-brother John from the succession to the throne. The next prince in the line of succession was therefore the duke of Södermanland who had been recognised as regent (*riksföreståndare*) by the Estates but who, for the time being, also had not yet been willing to accept the Swedish crown.<sup>707</sup>

Duke Charles's omission of King Sigismund's title as king of Sweden, both in the letter for the king and for the pope, and his presentation as governing crown prince were clear indicators: the duke's express wish of reconciliation with his nephew did no longer extend to Charles's acceptance of Sigismund as the rightful king of Sweden. It is therefore not surprising that in February 1601, Nuncio Rangoni informed Rome that King Sigismund 'did not want to accept his letter' because Duke Charles's address to him included neither 'the title of Sweden nor of Livonia'.<sup>708</sup> We have already discussed that titles of address were an important means for claiming, asserting and recognising status (Chapter 4.1.): from rulers to aristocrats, early modern princes were all acutely aware of the significance of titles. The papacy was no exception to this. Therefore, just like in Warsaw, the pope certainly also noticed that Duke Charles no longer acknowledged his nephew as king of Sweden and ruler of Livonia.

The titles which the duke used for himself and for King Sigismund in his letters plainly foreshadowed that finding a compromise would constitute an arduous task.

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<sup>704</sup> NLS, *MS Engeströmska samlingen*, B I.1.23, ff. 308r, 311v: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 16 March 1599 [O.S.].

<sup>705</sup> ADP, *FA*, 21, f. 105r: Duke Charles to Clement VIII, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S.].

<sup>706</sup> ADP, *FA*, 4, f. 88r: Duke Charles to Rangoni, 11 Dec 1600 [O.S.].

<sup>707</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, pp. 385, 387–388.

<sup>708</sup> ADP, *FA*, 4, f. 78r: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 12 Feb 1601.

Sigismund would have to insist that Charles recognised him as his sovereign and that the reconciliation entailed a resubmission of the duke to the king, while Charles Vasa apparently would have envisaged negotiations which would lead to a reconciliation between two sovereign powers, that is, between the crowns of Sweden and Poland.

On 12 February 1601, Rangoni forwarded Duke Charles's epistle for the pope to Rome.<sup>709</sup> Without Cardinal San Giorgio's letters to Rangoni for the year 1601, it is impossible to assess with certainty how the Holy See responded to Charles Vasa's letter. Rangoni's letters, fortunately, at least provide some information on the course of action which the pope wished to take and what King Sigismund thought of it.

The duke's letter must have arrived in Rome around mid-March 1601. By 16 April, the nuncio had already discussed the affair with King Sigismund. Rangoni reported that 'the king told me recently that he refers everything to His Holiness concerning the person which should be sent to Duke Charles'. Sigismund however also added the remark that his uncle was committing as many evil deeds as he could.<sup>710</sup> Thus, the king indicated that he did not believe that the duke had any honest intentions. On 22 April, the nuncio repeated that Sigismund III left all decisions on how to proceed in the matter to the pope. The king only asked for one condition, namely, that everything had to happen in secret so that he could 'continue to make war'.<sup>711</sup> In other words, Sigismund was not willing to envisage a ceasefire or truce in the meantime, fearing that his uncle would take military advantage during an armistice.

Rangoni's letters of 16 and 22 April thus suggest that Cardinal San Giorgio had instructed the nuncio in Poland to inform the king on the content of Duke Charles's letter for Clement VIII and to find out which course of action Sigismund wished the pope to take. This signifies that, in principle, the pontiff was still willing to send somebody to Charles Vasa, even though he kept waging war against Sigismund and no longer explicitly recognised the king as his lord. Like in spring 1600, Clement VIII probably again thought that King Sigismund had remained too vague when he merely entrusted everything concerning a papal mission to the discretion of the pope.

In early June 1601, Rangoni announced that he had received Cardinal San Giorgio's letter of 5 May. Most likely, the nuncio had been instructed to find out what the king would like the pontiff to do in more detail: the nuncio related that he had readdressed the topic of a papal mission in a conversation with the Polish king. Rangoni told the king of the pope's paternal good will for him and that 'His Holiness would be most ready to send some person

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<sup>709</sup> Ibid.

<sup>710</sup> Rangoni to San Giorgio, 16 April 1601, edited in: Buta, 'I paesi romeni', p. 208.

<sup>711</sup> ADP, *FA*, 4, f. 140r: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 22 April 1601.

on a mission to Duke Charles' if there was any chance that this would help King Sigismund. However, Rangoni insisted, it was the king who had to take the ultimate decision in this matter. The king, in return, stressed that he was aware of Clement's 'constant affection' for him but he doubted that a papal mission would have any positive outcome. Rangoni had a feeling that Sigismund's opinion could not be changed but still urged the king to consider and reconsider the proposal.<sup>712</sup>

One week later, on Sunday morning on the way to church, the nuncio again addressed the topic to the king. Once more Rangoni repeated that Clement VIII would send somebody to Duke Charles if the king 'declared that this was his wish'. The king again simply replied to the nuncio he did not believe that such a mission would have any positive outcome and that he would think about it.<sup>713</sup> Clearly, King Sigismund did not wish to accept Clement VIII's offer of a papal mission to the duke but Rangoni remained persistent. Eight days later, on 18 June, Rangoni reported that he had re-addressed the king on the pontiff's proposition to reconcile Duke Charles with Sigismund III. Rangoni reiterated that Clement would send whomever Sigismund wished on a mission to Charles Vasa and whenever the king wanted him to do it. Still, the king did not take any decision. Sigismund only replied to the nuncio that he did not know how his dignity would allow him to come to an agreement 'with that man', given what Charles had done and kept doing to him, and that he would think more about it.<sup>714</sup> This was the last time that the nuncio addressed the king on the topic. Rangoni probably ceased to mention the project because in summer 1601, all signs pointed to war: in summer 1601, Sigismund III started preparations for a major military counter-offensive in Livonia and decided to lead his army personally into battle.<sup>715</sup>

As we have seen, the Polish diet considered Sigismund's strife with his uncle as a Swedish matter. Consequently, the Polish diet did not grant the Swedish king any financial or military contribution for the re-conquest of Estonia even after Sigismund had ceded the province to the Polish crown. Subsequently, Charles's invasion of Polish Livonia in August 1600 'caught the Poles quite unprepared'.<sup>716</sup> Despite some military response by Polish-Lithuanian forces in late 1600, by March 1601 Claudio Rangoni reported to Rome that Duke Charles had conquered 'quasi the whole of Livonia'. Only Riga, the important trading city in the Baltic, and 'a few other places' had remained under Sigismund III's control.<sup>717</sup> On 22 April, however, the nuncio could announce that the Polish diet had decided to finance

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<sup>712</sup> Ibid., f. 163r.: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 3 June 1601.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid., f. 171r.: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 10 June 1601.

<sup>714</sup> Ibid., f. 173r.: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 18 June 1601.

<sup>715</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, p. 400.

<sup>716</sup> Ibid.

<sup>717</sup> ADP, *FA*, 4, f. 97v.: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 10 March 1601.

the war against Duke Charles for two years.<sup>718</sup> This information must have arrived in Rome by around 20 May and a reply of San Giorgio must have reached the nuncio around 20 June. This would explain why Rangoni did not speak to the king about a papal mission anymore after 18 June 1601: Sigismund III was resolved to fight his uncle and had finally received the financial means to do it.

The Polish support for a major military counter-offensive in 1601 turned the tide in Sigismund III's favour. Within one year, the king's forces re-conquered nearly all of Polish Livonia. Within another year, Sigismund again controlled Estonia, with the exception of Narva and Reval, and in September 1605, Charles's 'army was virtually annihilated' during the battle at Kirkholm. Outbreak of domestic discontent in Poland, however, prevented Sigismund III from pursuing the re-conquest of his native kingdom of Sweden.<sup>719</sup> The war over Livonia continued for several years and Gustav II Adolf only brought it under Swedish control in 1626.<sup>720</sup>

This subchapter has shown that the pope's duty to care for the pacification of Christendom enabled Charles Vasa to continue the dialogue of peace with the Holy See, irrespective of his real intentions. At first sight it seems surprising that the pope still considered sending somebody to Duke Charles even after Sigismund's uncle had committed further acts of aggression and had invaded Polish Livonia in August 1600. And that Rangoni still had to offer a papal intervention to King Sigismund up to mid-1601 even after Charles's letter clearly indicated that he no longer regarded Sigismund as king of Sweden. We have seen that the pontiff was *au courant* concerning King Sigismund's deposition and the subsequent events in Sweden and that the nuncio in Poland informed Rome regularly on Duke Charles's military successes in Livonia. Therefore, it is unlikely that the duke's assertions of good will distorted Clement VIII's perception of his intentions: the pontiff simply did not wish to let pass by untried any occasion to settle the conflict between the Vasa relatives.

The pope offered to reconcile Duke Charles and King Sigismund in order to help the king out at a time of extreme difficulties: between 1598 and 1601, Sigismund had lost the kingdom of Sweden, the duchy of Finland, Estonia and finally nearly the whole of Polish Livonia too. Once the king had received the required support from the *Sejm* and Sigismund

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<sup>718</sup> Ibid., f. 140r: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 22 April 1601. For the contribution of the diet see: Oakley, *War*, p. 43.

<sup>719</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, pp. 400–403. See also: Frost, *The Northern Wars*, pp. 62–65; Gottfried Schramm, *Der polnische Adel und die Reformation (1548–1607)* (Wiesbaden, 1965), pp. 291–314. For a short essay on the relations between the Holy See and Sigismund III after Clement VIII's death in 1605, see: Leszek Jaromiński, 'La Santa Sede e la Polonia sotto il pontificato di Paolo V', in Koller (ed.), *Aussenbeziehungen*, pp. 223–230.

<sup>720</sup> Davies, *Playground*, p. 338.

could prepare a counter-offensive, the papacy either realised that the king did not wish to envisage negotiations or the Holy See even deemed that a papal mission was no longer needed. Part two of this thesis highlighted that Clement VIII deemed that, in times of necessity, Catholic princes could come to terms with Protestants. The pope promoted peaceful relations between the Catholic Habsburgs and their 'heretical' Dutch subjects in diplomatic initiatives at Catholic courts and, by indirect means, also at the court of James VI/I. This part so far has shown that, in times of extreme military or political exigency, Clement even was disposed to send an informal papal mission to a Protestant nobleman in order to reconcile him with his Catholic king. However, the pontiff also had other reasons to try and find a peaceful solution to the conflict between the Vasa princes: Clement VIII's concern for internal stability in Poland in particular and, more generally, for safeguarding the Catholic faith in Europe.

## **8.2. Clement VIII's wider policy for Poland and Sweden around 1600**

In mid-September 1601, Nuncio Rangoni informed Cardinal San Giorgio that King Sigismund had left Vilnius for the battlefield in Livonia, in a great display of piety and of his resolution to end his uncle's military progress. On the morning of his departure, the king attended mass in the cathedral, returned to the Castle of Vilnius for an hour and, as he left it, caressed Prince Ladislas who had accompanied him to the steps. There, the king mounted his horse and the nuncio accompanied the monarch on his way out of the city. The nuncio assured the king that 'His Holiness will accompany him everywhere with his prayers' and then Rangoni gave Sigismund a last parting word of advice: the nuncio recommended to the departing king that he should be careful not to 'expose his person to any danger' in the war against Duke Charles.<sup>721</sup>

Rangoni's exhortation was of course mainly an expression of his care for the king's physical well-being. Yet, it also addressed the Holy See's concern for peace and stability in Poland. This subchapter situates the issues which arose from the struggle between the Vasa relatives within Clement VIII's more general policy for Poland and Sweden and explains where the pontiff's ultimate priorities lay. My aim is to demonstrate that, in his traditional role as the spiritual head of Christendom, the Aldobrandini pope approached specific problems from an inter- and supranational perspective. The pope's attitude towards one particular issue, therefore, can only be properly understood if it is considered as constituting part of overarching, national and international problems which the pontiff tried to solve.

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<sup>721</sup> ADP, *FA*, 4, f. 211r-v: Rangoni to San Giorgio, 12 Sept 1601.

When the nuncio exhorted King Sigismund not to take any personal risks in the war against his uncle in September 1601, Prince Ladislas, Sigismund's son, was six years old. Thus, in the case of the king's death, Ladislas would not have been able to reclaim the kingdom of Sweden from his great-uncle, the duke of Södermanland. And even so, if Charles had relinquished his hold on the Swedish government in favour of Ladislas, the young prince would not have been in any position to reintroduce Catholicism in Sweden against the opposition of Duke Charles and the Swedish Lutherans. Moreover, and more importantly for the pope, the death of Sigismund III would inevitably have triggered the election of a new Polish king.

Clement VIII himself, when he was still a cardinal, had witnessed the troubles which the election of a new Polish king could entail during his peace legation in Poland in 1588–1589. After the double-election of Sigismund Vasa and Archduke Maximilian (ruled Further Austria 1595–1618) as new kings of Poland in August 1587, an agreement was reached under the auspices of the Cardinal-Legate Ippolito Aldobrandini, the later Pope Clement VIII. Yet, Maximilian subsequently refused to take the required oath on the treaty. During the negotiations of the compromise, the archduke was a prisoner of the Polish grand chancellor and grand hetman, Jan Zamoyski, and therefore, Maximilian argued, he had not agreed upon it on his own free will.<sup>722</sup> In an attempt to reconcile the Habsburgs with Sigismund III, the cardinal-legate successfully promoted the revival of the marriage negotiations between the new Polish king and Archduke Maximilian's cousin, Archduchess Anna (1573–1598), whom Sigismund married in 1592.<sup>723</sup> Yet, the relations between Sigismund III and the Habsburgs remained difficult.

Archduke Maximilian, a brother of Emperor Rudolf II, refused to renounce his royal title for ten years, until 8 May 1598.<sup>724</sup> In a brief of April 1595, the former Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini and now Pope Clement VIII therefore exhorted the archduke to abandon his claim to the kingdom of Poland.<sup>725</sup> In the pope's opinion, the archduke's pretension was one of the obstacles which hindered the establishment of a league between King Sigismund III and Emperor Rudolf II against the Ottomans. This view is plainly articulated in the papal instructions for the special envoy Benedetto Mandina (c. 1547–1604) and for the Cardinal-Legate Enrico Caetani (1550–1599) whom the pope tasked in 1596 to work for the formation of an anti-Ottoman league between the emperor, Poland and

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<sup>722</sup> Leitsch, *Sigismund III*, p. 94.

<sup>723</sup> Leitsch, *Leben*, vol. II, pp. 1157–1158.

<sup>724</sup> Leitsch, *Sigismund III*, p. 95.

<sup>725</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, p. 409 (footnote 13).

The instruction for Mandina emphasised that one particular reason which often complicated matters in Poland was that 'certain restless minds still profess to adhere to the cause of Archduke Maximilian'. At the imperial court, Mandina therefore had to work either for the 'absolute resignation of this title [i.e. king of Poland] and of these damaging pretension' or at least for a 'precise promise of [Rudolf II], confirmed by the archduke, to renounce everything' as soon as Sigismund III agreed to wage war against the Ottoman Empire.<sup>727</sup> If Maximilian renounced his claim to the Polish throne, the instruction for Caetani explained, the archduke would win Sigismund III's trust and he would also 'chop the tree of thousand seditions and confusions from which all impediments originate' in Poland. The archduke's renunciation was not only 'for the good of Christendom' but also in the interest of the House of Austria: Maximilian's claim to the Polish crown did not have any other effect than to promote the affairs of Jan Zamoyski, an enemy of the Habsburgs.<sup>728</sup> Clement VIII was convinced that Zamoyski used Maximilian's claim to the Polish title in order to render the king suspicious of the Habsburgs and their supporters in Poland. As a consequence, the king had no other choice than to secure his position in Poland by 'keeping the forces in the hands of this chancellor and by augmenting his authority'.<sup>729</sup> According to Clement VIII, the Vasa king had two main objectives, and it seemed that the ambition of Zamoyski posed an obstacle to both of them.

The instruction for Claudio Rangoni in 1599 explained that Sigismund III's main concerns were 'the recuperation of the kingdom of Sweden [which was] occupied by Duke Charles, his uncle', and 'the preservation and perpetuation of his descendants in the kingdom of Poland'. Clement VIII was also persuaded that the Catholic faith could not be restored in the Swedish kingdom for as long as it remained 'oppressed by the tyranny of Duke Charles, a most obstinate heretic'. A military adventure of Sigismund III in Sweden, and the necessity of the king's presence to rule in his native kingdom, could, however, hinder a more permanent establishment of Sigismund's dynasty in the elective kingdom of Poland. Clement VIII was conscious that Sigismund III would have to rule personally in Sweden because there were no chances for any improvement of the political and religious situation there in the king's absence. Therefore, the pope believed that it was necessary to

<sup>726</sup> Ibid., pp. 409–410, 416, 437–439. For Mandina and Caetani, see: Vincenzo Lavenia, 'Mandina, Benedetto', *DBI*, 68 (2007), pp. 574–577; Gaspare de Caro, 'Caetani, Enrico', *DBI*, 16 (1973), pp. 148–155.

<sup>727</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, p. 416.

<sup>728</sup> Ibid., pp. 438. Walter Leitsch deemed Zamoyski's hostility towards the Habsburgs a 'Propagandaschlager' and an instrument of a demagogue which enabled him to impress the Polish nobility. Leitsch, *Leben*, vol. II, p. 697.

<sup>729</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, pp. 438–439.



find a solution which would allow Sigismund III to govern in Poland during a potentially prolonged stay of the king in Sweden. In the pope's opinion, there was only one means of preserving Poland in peace: an armed force which would keep restless minds at bay. The problem was, the pontiff thought, that the grand chancellor would have to be left in charge of the Polish forces during the king's absence.<sup>730</sup>

Clement VIII regarded Jan Zamoyski himself as one of the restless Polish minds. During his legation to Poland in 1588–1589, the relations between Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini and Jan Zamoyski were tense and Clement's opinion of the grand chancellor had not improved by 1599.<sup>731</sup> The instruction for Rangoni cautioned the nuncio of the 'vain glory and ambition of the chancellor' who was 'much a friend of himself and of glory'.<sup>732</sup> The pope feared that Zamoyski, who had risen from the station of a 'private person to the highest rank ever occupied by a citizen' in Poland, would not remain content with his eminent position and regarded him as a threat to the internal peace of the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth.<sup>733</sup> The pope suspected that Zamoyski's ambition even extended to reaching for the Polish crown and, according to the findings of Walter Leitsch these were the grand chancellor's intentions indeed.<sup>734</sup> The pope therefore thought that Zamoyski could not be entrusted with the Polish forces if Sigismund III intended to reassert his authority in Sweden and had to stay away from Poland for a prolonged period of time.

Yet, Clement VIII knew also that Zamoyski was 'captain general for life', that he enjoyed immense authority in Poland and that he could count on the support of a considerable portion of the Polish nobility. It was therefore 'vain to think' that the military command could be taken from Zamoyski. A further problem was, according to the pontiff, that 'the greatness and ambitious nature of the grand chancellor' had always rendered him suspect to the Polish churchmen and to those men who held the liberty of Poland in high regard. Consequently, the enemies of the grand chancellor would hardly consent that the military command would remain in the hands of Zamoyski during an absence of Sigismund III from Poland–Lithuania, especially if they had no guarantee that the king would return.<sup>735</sup> The instruction clearly alluded to the persistent fear in Poland that Sigismund might forsake Poland for his native kingdom, following the precedent set by Henry of Valois (ruled as king of Poland 1573–1575) who had secretly left Poland after he had

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<sup>730</sup> Ibid., pp. 599–600.

<sup>731</sup> Leitsch, *Sigismund III.*, p. 91.

<sup>732</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, p. 601.

<sup>733</sup> Ibid.

<sup>734</sup> Leitsch, *Sigismund III.*, pp. 239–260; Leitsch, *Leben*, vol. II, p. 695.

<sup>735</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, p. 600.

become king of France in 1574.<sup>736</sup> In 1599, Clement VIII therefore thought that without a clear provision for peace and stability in Poland–Lithuania during the king's absence, Sigismund III should not attempt to regain Sweden.

The pontiff hoped that Sigismund's recovery of Sweden and the preservation of internal peace in Poland could be achieved by combining these two problems. Rome proposed to make a virtue out of necessity: in the pope's opinion, the opposition in Poland to Zamoyski's increasing authority offered an excellent opportunity to consolidate Sigismund III's family as the ruling dynasty in the elective kingdom of Poland. Rangoni had to suggest to the king that 'it would be good to unite all affairs and to procure that the prince would be declared successor to the crown and that, at the same time, [Sigismund] would be allowed to leave for Sweden for two years'. King Sigismund, on the other hand, should promise to return to Poland in the end. As a guarantee for his promise, he should entrust Prince Ladislas to the custody of the archbishop of Gniezno and primate of Poland, Stanislaw Karnkowski (1520–1603).<sup>737</sup> The pope knew that Karnkowski was a 'secret enemy' of the grand chancellor and had always tried to undermine his ambitious endeavours, supported by other clergymen and members of the Polish nobility alike.<sup>738</sup> Therefore, with Ladislas nominated as the king's successor and in the safe hands of Karnkowski, the military command could be left in the hands of Zamoyski for the defence and preservation of the kingdom.<sup>739</sup>

In theory, the pope found a solution which would have allowed Sigismund III to reconquer the kingdom of Sweden and to secure the kingdom of Poland for his son, Prince Ladislas. The election of Ladislas as Sigismund III's successor in Poland then could serve as a precedent for establishing Sigismund's branch of the Vasa as a royal dynasty in Poland, which, in the long term, would favour internal peace and stability of the commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. In the short term, keeping Zamoyski and Karnkowski in check served the same goal, just as did curbing Archduke Maximilian's pretensions to the Polish throne. Yet, ultimately, the pope thought that the affairs in Poland had to take precedence over Sweden.

According to Michael Roberts, the 'recatholicization of Sweden was ... one of the most cherished objects of Pope Clement VIII'.<sup>740</sup> Certainly, in July 1593, upon Sigismund's journey to Sweden for his coronation as Swedish king, the papal instruction for the special envoy Bartolomeo Powsinski stressed that nothing was more important than the restoration

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<sup>736</sup> Leitsch, *Sigismund III.*, pp. 15, 21, 217–218, 251.

<sup>737</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, p. 600.

<sup>738</sup> Ibid., p. 604.

<sup>739</sup> Ibid., p. 600.

<sup>740</sup> Roberts, *Vasas*, p. 332.

of Sweden to the Catholic faith. Yet, the envoy also had to stress that the pope 'desired extremely' that the king would return to Poland again in the end.<sup>741</sup> The restoration of the Catholic religion in Sweden certainly was close to the pope's heart but stability in Poland was even closer to it. This priority of Poland over Sweden was even more clearly addressed in the papal instruction for Rangoni in 1599.

The pope left no doubts about his views on Sigismund III's goal of regaining his native kingdom and the potential risks which the king's absence could entail for the stability in the commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. The nuncio had to urge the king 'to prefer things which are sure to uncertain things and the conservation of the kingdom of Poland to everything'.<sup>742</sup> Clearly, in the pope's opinion, Sigismund Vasa should not endanger his rule in Poland by a perilous attempt to re-conquer Sweden: Sigismund III should not risk entering history as the king who had lost not one but two kingdoms. At the Holy See, Poland received priority over Sweden for two principal reasons: the retention of the Catholic religion in Poland and its protection against enemies from without Christendom.

According to the instruction for Rangoni, the Holy See 'had two main interests' in Poland, since 'there were two main enemies to the religion, the heretics and the Turk' against whom the nuncio had to work constantly.<sup>743</sup> The mission in Poland had been instituted as a 'reform nunciature' in 1556 with the objective to stop the proliferation of the Reformation among the Polish nobility and Rangoni's task was to continue the work of his predecessors.<sup>744</sup> Clement VIII thought that the establishment of Sigismund III and his descendants as a ruling dynasty in Poland would contribute towards the suppression of the Reformation in Poland in the long-term. As we have seen, the Aldobrandini pope generally thought that peace and stability promoted the cause of the Catholic religion whereas unrest favoured the spreading of heresy.<sup>745</sup> Moreover, Clement VIII must have been particularly concerned about the damages which political instability would have entailed for one of the biggest religious achievements of his pontificate: the reunion of the schismatic Ruthenian Uniate with the Roman Catholic Church in 1595/1596. The reunion met the resistance of a part of the Ruthenian clergy and required the pope to remind King Sigismund to watch over

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<sup>741</sup> JAITNER, vol. I, pp. 136, 138. For Powsinski's various activities in the service of Clement VIII, see: *ibid.*, vol. I, pp. CCXXXVII–CCXXXIX; Johan August Pärnänen, *L'ambassade de Bartolomeo Powsinski à Danzig en 1593* (Helsinki, 1911), pp. 3–18.

<sup>742</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, p. 600.

<sup>743</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 607–608.

<sup>744</sup> Almut Bues, "'Acta Nuntiaturae Polonae": Zur Erschliessung einer Quellengattung für die osteuropäische Geschichte', *Zeitschrift für Ostforschung*, 41 (1992), p. 391. More generally, see: Schramm, *Adel*, *passim*.

<sup>745</sup> Stöve, 'Häresiebekämpfung', p. 57.

the preservation of the union for the rest of his pontificate.<sup>746</sup> Thus, Clement VIII hoped that peace and stability in Poland would protect the Catholic religion against enemies from within the *respublica christiana*.

The pope also considered the Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth as *the* bulwark against enemies of the Church from without Christendom. This sentiment was clearly expressed in the instruction for Rangoni. In the very first sentence, the nuncio was reminded that on him as the nuncio to Poland 'can often depend the wellbeing of a great part of Christendom because this kingdom is like a bulwark of the whole of Europe against the Turkish Empire, the Tartars and the Muscovites'.<sup>747</sup> By this logic, any internal turbulence, power struggle and strife for the elective crown of Poland threatened to expose the rest of Christendom to possible invasions by 'infidels' and 'schismatics'. From Clement VIII's perspective, however, a league of Christian princes against the Ottoman Empire would have been even better than 'simply' ensuring stability in Poland.

However much Clement VIII may have wished to restore the Catholic faith in Sweden, 'his efforts', as Garstein emphasised, 'had to be concentrated on the desperate situation that confronted the Great Catholic Powers in Central Europe after the breakthrough of the Ottoman forces' in Hungary from 1596 onwards. An anti-Ottoman league between the emperor, Sigismund III and even the tsar in Moscow therefore now had 'top priority'.<sup>748</sup> The pope's attitude towards the strife between the Vasa relatives and his policy for central Europe more generally therefore needs to be considered as part of an overall policy which aimed at retaining the Catholic religion in the Latin West and at re-establishing the pope's position as the spiritual head of a re-unified *respublica christiana* in the long-term.

In June 1600, the month in which Clement VIII offered to reconcile Duke Charles with King Sigismund, Nuncio Rangoni informed Cardinal San Giorgio that he had spoken to Zamoyski, the Polish grand chancellor, about the importance of an anti-Ottoman league. Cardinal Cinzio Passeri Aldobrandini urged the nuncio 'not to waste any occasion' which allowed him to point out that Clement attributed the highest priority to the formation of such a league in his lifetime. Yet, the curia was aware that such exhortations were not likely to achieve anything.

As San Giorgio remarked resignedly, it was unlikely that the exhortations of the nuncio 'in private' would achieve more than all the special envoys and legates which

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<sup>746</sup> Pastor, *History*, vol. XXIV, pp. 127–140; Borys Gudziak, 'The Kyivan hierarchy, the Patriarchate of Constantinople and Union with Rome', in Bert Groen and Wil van den Bercken (eds.), *Four Hundred Years Union of Brest (1596–1996): A Critical Re-Evaluation* (Leuven, 1998), pp. 46–50.

<sup>747</sup> JAITNER, vol. II, p. 598.

<sup>748</sup> Garstein, *Rome*, vol. II, p. 225.

Clement VIII had already sent to Poland.<sup>749</sup> Clement was also aware that Sigismund III and Emperor Rudolf II were competing against each other in their attempts to extend their influence in Transylvania, Walachia and Moldavia at the turn of the century (see also Chapter 8.1.). In September 1600, Rangoni therefore received particular praise for trying to prevent 'any rupture between the Austrians and the Poles'.<sup>750</sup> Clement VIII, too, moved by his 'extraordinary concern for peace and concord' between Sigismund III and the emperor, did not omit any office and therefore addressed the issue in a brief to King Sigismund.<sup>751</sup> The pope's preoccupation with peace in Poland–Lithuania and between Sigismund III and the Habsburgs clearly originated in Clement VIII's desire to enable Sigismund to wage war against the Sublime Porte, if possible in conjunction with the emperor.

When, in September 1601, the nuncio in Poland admonished King Sigismund not to expose himself to danger during his campaign against Duke Charles, he obviously meant to express his and Clement VIII's concern for the king's personal health. The advice of the pope's representative, however, is symbolical for the papal policy, which had been outlined in general terms in Rangoni's instruction: the nuncio had to care for peace and stability in Poland in order to curb the spread of heresy and to lay the grounds for a Polish participation in the war against the Ottomans. Clement VIII's repeated offers to send somebody on a mission to Duke Charles in order to restore concord between the two Vasa relatives need to be understood within this context of the pope's concern for peace and stability in Poland–Lithuania.

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The goal of King Sigismund in the conflict with his uncle was mainly to re-establish his authority in all of his realms and to overcome the problems which his position as ruler of two independent crowns entailed: being able to exert his authority over one kingdom while he resided in another. The pope's approach to this conflict was more global. Chapter 6 explained that, already in 1598, the pope declared that he would not oppose a reconciliation between the Spanish Habsburgs and the rebelling Dutch 'heretics'. Instead, he would simply ignore any political settlement between the two confessional enemies. As we have seen in Chapter 3, the pope even approved of peace between the Catholic Habsburgs and the

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<sup>749</sup> ASV, *FB, serie IV*, 215b, f. 194v: San Giorgio to Rangoni, 24 June 1600.

<sup>750</sup> Buta, 'I raggiugli', pp. 302–303.

<sup>751</sup> ASV, *FB, serie IV*, 215b, f. 221r: San Giorgio to Rangoni, 23 Sept 1600. Summarised in: Buta, 'I raggiugli', p. 303. For the brief, see: ASV, *Arm. XLIV*, 44, ff. 255v–256r (no. 271): Clement VIII to Sigismund III, 23 Sept 1600.

excommunicated queen of England in 1599 and 1600, as long as it also entailed an improvement for the English Catholics. This lenient attitude towards these enemies of the Catholic Church in Christendom needs to be understood within the larger, inter- and supranational context within which the Holy See operated: the pope regarded all these different theatres of conflict as forming part of a much wider problem: the afflicted state of the Latin West which was under attack from within and without Christendom. This was also the case in the pope's Poland- and Sweden-policy in general, and in his attitude towards the strife between the Vasa relatives in particular.

After the conclusion of the Peace of Vervins in 1598, the pontiff hoped that he would now be able to turn (Catholic) Christendom against the Ottoman enemy, if feasible in a league of as many Catholic powers as possible. In 1600, these papal negotiations for an anti-Ottoman league between the emperor, Spain, France, Venice and the Holy See were particularly intensive, until the impending war between France and Savoy over Saluzzo forced the pope to abort his plans in mid-July 1600.<sup>752</sup> Clement VIII's offer to send a mission to Duke Charles in his brief of 10 June 1600 therefore should also be regarded as an attempt of the Aldobrandini pope to create the best possible conditions for a major offensive against the Ottoman Empire. The pontiff was aware that such a mission was likely to fail and could be considered as imprudent but did not wish to let elapse any occasion which could have led to a reconciliation between the duke and his nephew.<sup>753</sup> If, on the other hand, the papal mission had proved to be a success, the pope would have allowed Sigismund to rule in his Swedish patrimony again without having to fight his uncle and without risking the stability in Poland during a military campaign in Sweden. Instead, the king would have been able to embark on the anti-Ottoman war. Thus, a papal mission to the Protestant duke of Södermanland would have offered the pontiff an opportunity to work towards the restoration of the Catholic religion in Sweden as well as its retention in Poland and, more generally, in Christendom.

An appeal to the pope for intervention in favour of peace between Catholics and Protestants was not without precedent. Chapter 6 has highlighted that after the conclusion of the Peace of Vervins, Ernest of Bavaria approached Clement VIII with requests to turn his attention to the pacification of Flanders. Ernest of Bavaria, however, as the prince-electors-archbishop of Cologne, was a Catholic prince. Duke Charles, on the other hand, was a Protestant nobleman. The letters of Charles Vasa demonstrate clearly that Sigismund's uncle was familiar with the pope's duties as the spiritual head of the *respublica*

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<sup>752</sup> Niederkorn, *Mächte*, pp. 93 and 216–217.

<sup>753</sup> ASV, *FB*, *serie IV*, 215b, f. 177v: San Giorgio to Rangoni, 8 April 1600.

*christiana* in general, and also with Clement VIII's particular efforts to assert the papacy's supranational position, making peace in Christendom and promoting the war against the Ottomans. The pontiff's duties as the spiritual head of Christendom therefore provided a rhetorical framework for the Protestant nobleman to ask Clement VIII for a favour, seemingly not for himself but for the greater good of the *respublica christiana*: Charles Vasa simply appealed to Clement VIII's traditional duty to care for peace in Christendom and for the war against the Ottomans, without pretending that he intended to accept the pope as his spiritual lord. The pontiff and a Protestant prince therefore could use the abstract idea of the pope as the father of all Catholic princes who cares for peace in their realms as a tool in diplomatic practice for discussing the resolution of an international cross-confessional conflict.

With hindsight, it might seem surprising that the pontiff offered to send a papal agent on an unofficial diplomatic mission to Duke Charles and that he even merely considered reconciling Sigismund III with his uncle who ultimately ascended the Swedish throne in 1604. The pontiff was aware of the political and religious situation in Poland, Livonia and Sweden and simply intended to explore every possible diplomatic opportunity with the required precaution in the hope that a reconciliation between the two Vasa relatives would favour the Catholic cause in the long term. In offering his help, Clement VIII had nothing to lose: if an informal papal mission failed, he could always blame it on the stubbornness of the 'heretics' without incurring a serious damage to his glory. An agreement between Duke Charles and King Sigismund, on the other hand, could have led to the restoration of Sigismund's control over his native Kingdom, Sweden: the pope aimed to reconcile the duke with his king, not to make peace between a Protestant and a Catholic sovereign.

Moreover, from the pontiff's point of view, with his potential contribution towards stability and domestic peace in Poland, Lithuania and Sweden, he would have fortified the bulwark of the whole of Europe against 'schismatics' and 'infidels'. At the same time, he would have laid the grounds for a possible league between Poland and the emperor against the Ottomans. Clement VIII's universal approach depended on too many actors and their particular interests for it to be successful but, for the pontiff, the option of reconciling the Protestant duke with his Catholic king offered a singular and unmissable opportunity to make one step towards his lofty goals. The example of the struggle between the two Vasa relatives and Clement VIII's offer to intervene in the strife shed a new light on the papacy's attitude towards peace across confessional boundaries around 1600. If a transconfessional conflict had the potential to damage the cause of the Catholic religion in areas which had not yet been lost to the Catholic Church and if it risked having negative effects for the

defence of Christendom against the Ottoman threat, Clement VIII was willing to make peace between a Catholic sovereign and his Protestant subject by sending an informal papal peace mission to the 'heretical' nobleman.



## CONCLUSION

The decay of the *respublica christiana* over the course of the late Middle Ages and the early modern period challenged established legal and diplomatic practices which, based on canon and Roman law, had regulated the relations between Christian princes. The outbreak of the Reformation in the early sixteenth century in particular led to heated discussions how Catholic rulers should deal with 'heretical' subjects and princes. The Reformation also posed serious religious, legal, political and diplomatic challenges to the papacy's universalist claims and had a lasting effect on the papacy's traditional duty to make peace in Christendom. Throughout the early modern period, as Johannes Burkhardt argued, the Holy See never considered engaging in any diplomatic activity which would have settled conflicts between Catholic and Protestant powers.<sup>754</sup> This thesis has qualified Burkhardt's assertion in a case study of Clement VIII's response to the challenges which the presence of 'heretics' within the *respublica christiana* posed to the pope's traditional duty to make peace among Christian princes, a duty which had allowed the papacy to assert its right to intervene in the temporal sphere.

When Clement VIII ascended to the papal throne, Catholic princes had already established diplomatic contact with Protestant powers and granted religious liberties to 'heretical' subjects but the questions whether these emerging political and diplomatic practices were permissible at all were still debated by Catholic thinkers. This thesis has shown that Clement VIII promoted the settlement of cross-confessional conflicts at a time when popes generally refused to establish formal diplomatic contact with princes who, according to canon law, had automatically incurred the major excommunication and forfeited their right to rule as sovereigns by their adherence to heresy. Yet, Clement VIII did not go to the same lengths as Pius IV who established diplomatic contact with Protestant princes and who considered making concessions to Protestants with the aim to re-establish religious concord.<sup>755</sup>

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<sup>754</sup> Burkhardt, *Abschied*, pp. 5–6, 373–374.

<sup>755</sup> Caccamo, 'Commendone', pp. 608–609; Visceglia, 'The international policy', p. 34; Bonora, *Giudicare i vescovi*, pp. 249–250.

Historical scholarship tends to concentrate on political and diplomatic successes rather than failures. Moreover, historians interested in the papacy as a peacemaking force normally analyse the role of diplomatic actors during formal peace talks. Inevitably, this signifies that these scholars study negotiations of the Holy See which aimed at restoring peace between Catholic powers. There is abundant research on Clement VIII as a peacemaker between Spain, France and Savoy and on his efforts to make Catholic princes support Rudolf II against the Ottomans. Scholarship, however, has not recognised that the negative course of the emperor's anti-Ottoman war had an immense impact on the pope's interpretation of his role as the spiritual head of Christendom in as much as peace with 'heretics' was concerned. Neither has scholarship recognised that Clement's attempts to make peace in the *respublica christiana* and to turn the Catholic princes against the Ottomans also influenced how other princes perceived what role the pope would be willing to fulfil in transconfessional peace processes. This doctoral thesis has concentrated on the degree to which a pope was willing to promote and to become involved in cross-confessional peace negotiations and also analysed papal diplomatic and political efforts which ultimately did not bear fruit. This approach provided important insights into Clement VIII's interpretation of his role as supreme peacemaker of Christendom.

Clement VIII refused to allow any envoys of Protestant powers to participate in the papal peace negotiations in Vervins. The pope and Cardinal Aldobrandini also rejected to include articles in the Franco-Spanish peace which benefitted Protestant powers. Clement VIII, however, also signalled to his legate in France and to the Spanish ambassador in Rome that if Spain negotiated peace with the English and the Dutch he would not disapprove of an agreement either. Similarly, in 1599–1600, the pontiff did not exhort Philip III and the archdukes to persist in their war against Elizabeth I but insisted that the Habsburgs had to obtain securities for the English Catholics in peace negotiations. Thus, unlike canonist thinkers such as Alfonso de Castro, Clement VIII did not insist that Catholic princes had to fight 'heretical' rulers, not even if such a ruler, like Elizabeth I, had been excommunicated and formally deposed by a pope. Still, his constant exhortations to conclude peace only if it directly served the interest of religion also underline that the pontiff did not approve of an agreement with Protestant England at all cost. At least not yet.

This study revealed what role other individuals expected the pope to fulfil as the spiritual head of Christendom. In summer 1598, after the conclusion of the Franco-Spanish peace, *avvisi* related that there was a rumour at the papal court in Ferrara that Clement VIII's dedication to the anti-Ottoman war would induce him to make peace between the Catholic king of Spain and the excommunicated English queen by sending a cardinal–

legate to England. This would have signified that the Holy See established formal diplomatic relations with Elizabeth I. These *avvisi* thus suggest that some people considered that, in the expectation that an Anglo-Spanish peace would further the anti-Ottoman war, Clement VIII would be willing to compromise the dignity of the Holy See and to recognise the sovereignty of a prince who had been formally deposed by a pope.

Conversely, the prince–elector–archbishop of Cologne, Ernest of Bavaria, did not expect Clement VIII to reconcile Catholic princes with Protestants directly. Instead, Ernest thought that the pope could be persuaded to use his papal authority for promoting the pacification of Flanders at the imperial court and that he would exhort the archdukes as well as Philip III to come to terms with the Dutch United Provinces. The pope's duty as the spiritual head of the *respublica christiana* to care for peace in Christendom and to defend the Catholic religion against its enemies therefore enabled a prince of the Catholic Church to approach the pope with a delicate request: the archbishop could encourage the pontiff to promote a reconciliation of Catholic rulers with enemies who posed a threat to the Catholic Church from within Christendom. Ernest simply had to emphasise that such a reconciliation would allow the pope to protect the Catholic faith in the Low Countries in the long-term and that it would free military resources for defending the Catholic religion against the Ottomans in the meantime.

Similarly, the pope's traditional duties as the spiritual leader of Christendom provided the Protestant Duke Charles of Södermanland with a rhetorical device for contacting Clement VIII on his strife with the Catholic King Sigismund. Duke Charles appealed to the pope's tasks to care for peace in Christendom and for its protection against the Ottomans, invoking Clement VIII's apparent and particular desire to fulfil these duties. From the point of view of the Holy See, Charles Vasa himself was an enemy of the Church. Charles therefore carefully avoided mentioning his religious differences with King Sigismund in his letter to the pontiff. Clement equally decided not to address the confessional dimension of the conflict in his reply for the duke. Charles Vasa and Clement VIII may have regarded each other as confessional enemies but the pope's duty to pacify Christendom and to defend it against the Ottomans allowed them to gloss over doctrinal differences and to explore the possibility of an informal papal peace mission. These traditional duties of the pope thus could become a device in international diplomacy through which Catholic and Protestant princes alike could discuss ideas of cross-confessional reconciliation with the pontiff.

Clement would not make peace between Catholic and Protestant sovereign powers. The deterioration of Sigismund III's political and military situation in Sweden and Estonia, however, moved Clement VIII to offer to reconcile a Catholic ruler with his Lutheran

subject by sending an unofficial diplomatic mission to Duke Charles. The pontiff even upheld his offer after the duke no longer acknowledged his nephew as king of Sweden. The pope hoped that his intervention would allow Sigismund III to re-assert his rule and to restore the Catholic religion in Sweden. He also hoped that this would ensure political stability in Poland–Lithuania which the pope considered as *the* bulwark against the external enemies of Christendom, such as the Tartars, Muscovites and the Ottomans. Clement VIII thus deemed that he would be working for the interest of the Catholic religion in Sweden, Poland and even the whole of Christendom if he helped to stabilise Sigismund's rule in all his dominions and that, in cases of necessity, a pontiff could act as an informal, transconfessional peacemaker. Military necessity and Clement VIII's concern for the cause of the Catholic religion also induced the pontiff to alter his attitude in matters relating to the pacification of Flanders.

Contrary to Eckehart Stöve's assertion, Clement VIII did not merely grudgingly and tacitly agree that Catholics sovereigns could temporarily prioritise their political interests over the defence of the Catholic religion:<sup>756</sup> when he deemed it necessary, Clement even actively promoted peaceful relations between Catholic sovereigns and their 'heretical' subjects at Catholic courts. In 1598, Clement VIII rejected the propositions of Ernest of Bavaria and Archduke Albert that he should promote the reconciliation between the archdukes, Spain and the Dutch. At the latest by 1602, the pope thought that the Spanish Habsburgs would not be able to reduce the Dutch to obedience and that the negative course of Rudolf II's war against the Ottomans required the full military support of the Spanish king. Eventually, Clement VIII therefore decided to use his apostolic authority to promote a long truce between the Catholic Habsburgs and their Calvinist 'rebels', even if such a truce did not necessarily benefit the Catholic cause immediately. At the same time, the pope wished the elector of Cologne to find out how James VI/I could be encouraged to make the Dutch come to terms with the archdukes and Philip III.

Clement VIII justified these initiatives with the hope that a long truce would induce the Dutch to submit themselves to their sovereigns and that political stability would ultimately restore Catholicism in all provinces of the Low Countries. While Clement certainly would not approve of any plan of a Catholic ruler to grant 'heretical' subjects religious liberties *de jure* (as Henry IV had done to the pope's great displeasure in the Edict of Nantes), he thought that, if necessary, Catholic sovereigns could desist from fighting heresy within their jurisdiction. Thus, *de facto*, the pope conceded that Catholic princes could tolerate 'heretics' within their commonwealths. By 1603, Clement VIII's attitude

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<sup>756</sup> Stöve, 'Häresiebekämpfung', p. 59, 64–65.

towards an Anglo-Spanish peace had changed as well.

King James's 1603 accession in England potentially offered new opportunities for the restoration of Catholicism in England. Contrary to prevalent historiography, Clement VIII was not duped into blindly trusting that the 'heretical' King James VI of Scotland would definitively convert if he managed to obtain the English crown. The pontiff signalled his benevolence to James VI and thus tried to encourage the king's conversion. Yet, he also explored options to install an indubitably Catholic candidate in England between early 1601 and 1603 by a joint Franco-Spanish military enterprise.

After James's accession in England, the pontiff tried to exert influence on King James VI/I with the help of Queen Anne, the ambassadors of Catholic rulers and by secret, indirect contacts between the nuncio and the English ambassador in Paris. The pope intended to convince King James VI/I that he did not need to fear any papal plot or declaration against him in the hope that this would induce the king to favour rather than to fear his Catholic subjects, and maybe even to convert one day. The pope also wished Philip III to conclude peace with James VI/I even if the Spanish king would not be able to include articles favourable to the English Catholics and hence even if the agreement with the 'heretical' ruler did not promise to have any immediate advantages for the Catholic religion. As in the case of Philip III's war against the Dutch, the pontiff doubted that Spain had the military capability to win its war against England. Moreover, Clement VIII expected that an Anglo-Spanish peace would enable Philip III to assist Emperor Rudolf II more decisively in the war against the Sublime Porte. And indeed, after the conclusion of the Treaty of London in 1604, Philip III supported the war against the Ottomans with the largest sum during the entire 'Long Turkish War'.

Clement VIII therefore neither insisted that Catholic princes had to wage religious wars against 'heretical' rulers nor that they absolutely had to secure articles in favour of the Catholic religion in transconfessional agreements when he considered that peaceful relations with 'heretics' would lead to advantages for the Catholic Church in the long term. It is, however, necessary to emphasise that even if Clement VIII, like Laetmatius and later Bragaccia, deemed that potential advantages for the Catholic cause rendered transconfessional contacts or agreements legitimate, he did not regard pacts of Catholics with 'heretical' rulers as legally binding. After all, the pope had told Henry IV that he did not need to keep the *fides* which he had given to Elizabeth I in the Treaty of Greenwich since she was a 'heretic'.

The court in Spain welcomed Clement VIII's recommendation to come to terms with the Dutch and James VI/I but resented the pope's emphasis on Spain's military weakness

and that he no longer insisted on the interest of religion as a precondition for making peace with England in 1603–1604: the Spanish court wanted to prove that religious rather than political interests had been Spain's reason to start and to end the war with England. For the pope, Spain's peace with James VI/I was a political means to a religious end whereas the Spanish court wanted to present the cause of the Catholic religion as the end of all its political deeds. Still, Clement VIII's exhortation to the Spanish king to settle his conflicts with England and the Dutch and to turn his arms against the Ottomans gave Philip III an opportunity to present his resolution to come to terms with 'heretics' as an act of filial obedience to the pope rather than as an outright military necessity. It also provided the king and his advisers with a means for justifying their accommodating policy towards 'heretics' to critics in Spain and abroad. After all, this policy had been backed and even promoted by the pope, the supreme judge in matters of faith.

Alain Tallon highlighted that, over the course of the sixteenth century, the papacy's insistence that Catholic princes had to prioritise religion over political interests and exigencies, and its theocratic attempts to re-assert the pope's right to intervene in the temporal sphere led to the marginalisation of the papacy's international political influence.<sup>757</sup> The papacy's religious intransigence thus damaged the political position of the pope as the spiritual head of Christendom. Conversely, Paolo Prodi had argued that the frequent precedence which popes gave to the consolidation of their position as Italian princes at the expense of the implementation of the Tridentine decrees in the Papal States lastingly damaged their authority as temporal rulers and as the spiritual heads of Catholic Christendom.<sup>758</sup> Similarly, Alexander Koller emphasised that pontiffs such as Clement VIII and Urban VIII sometimes prioritised their interests as the rulers of the Papal States or as heads of their families over the duties of the pope as a spiritual prince. By doing so, they ended up following 'non-confessional policies'.<sup>759</sup>

This doctoral thesis emphasised that Clement VIII attempted to introduce his temporal interests to the international religio-political policies which he tried to implement in his role as the spiritual head of Christendom. The pontiff hoped to obtain the English crown for a member of the Farnese family with whom the Aldobrandini were allied by marriage and made his nephew, Gian Francesco Aldobrandini, benefit financially as commander of the papal troops in Hungary. As an Italian prince, Clement VIII tried to protect the Apennine peninsula against Ottoman incursions. In as much as

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<sup>757</sup> Tallon, "C'est le pape", pp. 65–66, 69; Tallon, 'Entre intransigence', p. 339.

<sup>758</sup> Prodi, *Il sovrano pontefice*, pp. 295–344; Prodi, 'Il "sovrano pontefice"', pp. 198–216.

<sup>759</sup> Koller, *Imperator*, p. 153.

transconfessional conflicts were concerned, Clement VIII's decision to sacrifice important goals of Catholic restoration, however, did not originate in a conflict of interest between the pope's duties as the spiritual head of Christendom and his role as a temporal ruler or as the head of a family.

Although Clement VIII approved and even intervened in favour of political reconciliation between Catholic and Protestant princes, he only seemingly followed a non-confessional policy: Clement VIII's strategy aimed at a Catholic restoration in the long-term. The pope's prioritisation of political and military exigencies over immediate advantages for the Catholic religion was motivated by Clement VIII's conviction that peace would ultimately allow the Catholic faith to flourish again in commonwealths which had been ravaged by war. In the meantime, peace in the confessionally divided *respublica christiana* would enable the Catholic princes to defend Christendom against the advancing Ottomans. Clement's international religio-political policies therefore were mainly influenced by his desire to defend – and to be seen as defending – the Catholic religion in the decaying *respublica christiana*.

Clement VIII was not able to unite the Catholic princes in a league against the Ottomans. Yet, as Jan Paul Niederkorn emphasised, without the pope's continuous diplomatic efforts, the other Catholic powers would certainly have lent less military and financial support for the emperor's war against the Sublime Porte.<sup>760</sup> Moreover, Clement VIII's dedication to the defence of Christendom against the Ottomans had 'a very positive impact on the image of the papacy' which probably constituted an important incentive for Pope Paul V to continue these anti-Ottoman initiatives, even if he did so less fervently than the Aldobrandini pontiff.<sup>761</sup> Just like the successful peace negotiations in Vervins and Lyons, Clement's diplomatic efforts to make Catholic rulers join the anti-Ottoman war allowed the pope to reassert the papacy's diplomatic and political influence in the international power system and thus to promote the pontiff's universal position as the spiritual head in the decaying *respublica christiana*. In order to be able to exert influence in the temporal sphere, Clement VIII thus departed from the rigid attitude which had dominated papal international politics for nearly the entire second half of the sixteenth century: he did not insist that Catholic rulers always had to reconcile their political goals with the interest of religion and even encouraged them to come to terms with 'heretics'.

Paul V initially continued Clement VIII's policy of placidness towards James but the gunpowder plot and the controversy over the Oath of Allegiance interrupted the informal

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<sup>760</sup> Niederkorn, *Mächte*, pp. 101–102.

<sup>761</sup> Jan Paul Niederkorn, 'Papst, Kaiser und Reich während der letzten Regierungsjahre Kaiser Rudolfs II. (1605–1612)', in Koller (ed.), *Aussenbeziehungen*, pp. 84–85 (quotation p. 85).

friendly Anglo-papal relations until Urban VIII revived them again in the 1630s when he thought the Anglican schism could be ended under Charles I. In the mid-seventeenth century, Nuncio Fabio Chigi (later Pope Alexander VII; r. 1655–1667) formally protested against articles in the peace treaties of Westphalia which made concessions to Protestants. Chigi's protestations were confirmed in the papal brief *Zelo Domus Dei* in 1650 (antedated to 1648). The brief claimed to nullify the articles which damaged the interests of the Catholic Church and aimed at providing a legal fundament for contesting these articles once that the political and military balance of power would turn into the favour of the Catholic princes again.<sup>762</sup> Moreover, during the negotiations in Münster, as Alexander Koller highlighted, Chigi generally tried to avoid contact with Protestants as much as possible without causing any offence. Yet, if feasible, Chigi also attempted to obtain favours for Protestants when they approached him with a request.<sup>763</sup> This indicates that Clement VIII and Pius IV probably were not the exceptions which confirm the rule that the early modern papacy never considered following a peace policy which potentially benefitted Protestant powers too, even if the papacy never participated in formal transconfessional peace negotiations and formally nullified articles in a peace treaty which damaged the Catholic cause.

The demonstrative religious intransigence of the papacy, expressed in its refusal to participate in any negotiations which aimed at making peace with Protestants and particularly in the protest against the Westphalian treaties, signified that the Holy See delimited the political and diplomatic influence of the pope as the spiritual head of Christendom in international power politics, especially in as much as peacemaking was concerned. Over the course of the seventeenth and into the eighteenth centuries, popes continued to participate in international peace congresses but played an increasingly marginal role since they would only negotiate with Catholic powers.<sup>764</sup> Yet, as this thesis has shown, the papacy's refusal to establish any formal diplomatic contact with 'heretics' and to negotiate with Protestant powers did not signify that all popes were entirely opposed to cross-confessional peace: more research needs to be conducted in order to gain a fuller understanding of the role which popes were disposed and expected to fulfil in transconfessional peace processes. Such research would allow scholars to move the focus away from the 'official' image which popes tried to portray of the papacy and to understand to what degree individual popes were willing to make concessions to Protestants in their *Realpolitik*.

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<sup>762</sup> Repgen, *Dreissigjähriger Krieg*, pp. 542–545; Koller, *Imperator*, pp. 208–209; Schneider, "'Types'", p. 96.

<sup>763</sup> Koller, *Imperator*, p. 203.

<sup>764</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 209–210; Barbiche, *Bulla*, pp. 172–179.



The early modern papacy claimed to occupy a position above all other powers in the decaying *respublica christiana*. In its politics and diplomacy, the Holy See therefore also approached specific national and international issues from a supranational perspective. The papal instructions for nuncios and legates allow historians to establish a pope's general policies. The transnational scope and the close analysis of diplomatic correspondence in this thesis, on the other hand, have shed light on how, in his daily diplomatic activities, Clement VIII adapted his religio-political policies for one specific state according to unfolding political and military events in the rest of Christendom.

In the first years of the seventeenth century, Clement VIII realised that the Spanish Habsburgs were not able to win the war in the Low Countries even though their forces had been freed from the war in France after the pope had made peace between the Spanish and the French crowns in 1598. Moreover, King Sigismund had lost control over his native kingdom of Sweden as well as over the duchy of Finland and his Protestant uncle was in the process of gaining hold over Livonia too. And Emperor Rudolf II was on the brink of losing his war against the Ottomans.

The Aldobrandini pope did not insist that Catholic rulers had to prioritise the immediate defence of the Catholic religion above their political and military concerns and thus was willing to take the political interests and necessities of Catholic princes into account in his international religio-political policies. Consequently, during Clement VIII's reign, the role of the pope as *padre comune* and spiritual head of Christendom became 'politicised'. To some degree, it even became de-confessionalised: other princes expected that the Aldobrandini pontiff would use his papal authority for working towards peace across confessional boundaries and the pope, as a matter of fact, ultimately complied with these expectations. Towards the end of Clement VIII's reign, the Holy See therefore became a channel for Catholic sovereigns through which they could pass their intentions to come to terms with 'heretics' and by which their accommodating policies were even promoted and thus informally approved by the pope. Still, the ulterior goal of Clement VIII's diplomatic initiatives as the spiritual head of Christendom was purely confessional.

The pontiff generally believed that war favoured the spreading of heresy whereas peace and stability would allow the 'true faith' to triumph and that military resources should be employed against the Ottomans instead. The diplomatic efforts of Clement VIII therefore aimed at the protection of the Catholic religion against the advancing Ottomans in the short-term and at its restoration across Christendom in the long-term. Consequently, Clement VIII was even willing to promote cross-confessional reconciliation in cases where

he deemed that a war was likely to continue for much longer or that Catholic rulers risked emerging defeated from a conflict with Protestants. In cases of necessity, in the interest of the anti-Ottoman war and for the restoration of the Catholic faith, the Aldobrandini pope therefore even intervened – and was asked to intervene – in favour of transconfessional peace in Christendom. The pontiff hoped that tranquillity in the *respublica christiana* would also lead to an end of the religious divide in Europe and thus, ultimately, to an uncontested re-establishment of the pope's former position as the spiritual head of *all* Christendom.

## APPENDIX

Charles Vasa, duke of Södermanland, Närke and Värmland to Pope Clement VIII [copy]

11 Dec 1600 [O.S.], Wittenstein [Paide]

Reverendissime et Potentissime Domine Romanae Catholicae Ecclesiae Pontifex Maxime. Litteras R.<sup>tiae</sup> T.<sup>ae</sup> quibus R.<sup>tia</sup> T.<sup>a</sup> nostris anno superiori ad R.<sup>tiam</sup> T.<sup>am</sup> scriptis respondet perpetuus R.<sup>tiae</sup> T.<sup>ae</sup> in Polonia nuncius Carolus Rongonus ad nos transmisit ex quibus quod maxime optamus cognovimus R.<sup>tiam</sup> T.<sup>am</sup> nihil magis cupere, quam ut pax et tranquillitas toti Christiano Orbi restituatur, praesertim vero concordia & pristina animorum coniunctio inter Regem Poloniae & nos redintegretur & coalescat. Ad quam curam si cogitationes & operam suam R.<sup>tia</sup> T.<sup>a</sup> adijciat ut nimirum bellorum facibus extinctis pax in orbe Christiano restauretur, Regemq(ue) Poloniae ad pacis concilia inflectat: praeterquam quod immortalens sibi nominis gloriam pepererit, etiam quod sui est officis fecerit filioq(ue) R.<sup>tiae</sup> T.<sup>ae</sup> Regi Poloniae optime consuluerit et nobis rem gratissimam praestiterit.

Ad nos etenim quod attinet tranquillitatis & concordia media nunquam aversati sumus, quae si toties a filio R.<sup>tiae</sup> T.<sup>ae</sup> accepta fuissent, quoties a nobis oblata in praesentem statum res deducta non fuisset. Nec adhuc quidem pacis conditiones repudiamus. Si ulla aequitatis obtinendae ratio pateat, malitq(ue) filius R.<sup>tiae</sup> T.<sup>ae</sup> hoc negotium aequis arbitris componendum committere quam armis decernere. Ad quam rem si quidquam Legati R.<sup>tia</sup> T.<sup>ae</sup> praeentiam conferre R.<sup>tia</sup> T.<sup>a</sup> iudicaverit, tuto illum ad nos mittere poterit. Nos etenim ab omni humanitate rerumq(ue) usu ita alieni non sumus ut quod omnium gentium iure legatis debeatur non intelligamus illudq(ue) libenter ipsis deferamus.

[ADP, *Fondo Aldobrandini*, 21, f. 105r.]

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